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SIGILLVM ✦ ACADEMIÆ ✦ MASSACHVSETTENSIS ✦ IN ✦ NOVA ✦ ANGLIA

THE WINKLES.

THE WINKLES;

OR

THE MERRY MONOMANIACS.

An American Picture

WITH

PORTRAITS OF THE NATIVES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"WILD WESTERN SCENES," Etc.

NEW YORK:
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D. APPLETON & COMPANY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.

DEDICATION.

This Work

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO THE

WIDOW CUSTIS,

OF

NEWBERN, NORTH CAROLINA,

BY HER

FRIEND AND ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR.

BURLINGTON, N. J.,
May, 1858.

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THE WINKLES.

CHAPTER I.

SHADOWS OF COMING EVENTS.

Babbleton was an ancient village near the city of Philadelphia. It had a wharf where the steamboats landed, and a depot where the locomotives whistled. Hence, although the principal mansions were situated on commodious lots, and in many instances separated from each other by broad yards and close fences, it is not to be inferred there was ever a monotonous deficiency of noise and excitement in the place. It had its proud and its miserable, its vanities and its humiliations, its bank and its bakers, its millionaires and its milliners; and was not unfrequently the scene of some of those entertaining comedies of life, which have been considered in all enlightened countries worthy of preservation in veracious and impartial history. Such a record we have attempted to produce; and although the direct manner of narration adopted may offend the taste of the fastidious critic, yet the less acutely discerning reader may possibly deem himself compensated for the labor of perusal, by the reliable assurance of the authenticity of the story, and the interest attending the occurrences flitting before his mental vision.

At a convenient distance from the trafficking centre of the town, was an old, square, two-story brick dwelling, embowered with overhanging trees. In the rear and on the south were a few acres belonging to the premises, which had been originally planned for a magnificent lawn, but were subsequently, for certain reasons, devoted to more useful purposes. The grounds, at the most distant extremity from the house, were bounded by a sparkling brook, whose source was in a range of hills a few miles distant. This stream had always been, and is yet, as every one knows, famous for its abundance of small trout.

It was in the glimmer of twilight, and the lamp suspended in the hall of the old mansion had been lit by Biddy, the widow Winkle's housemaid. The rays illuminated the ancient wainscoting, where some forgotten son of genius had once exercised his powers of creation in the production of a number of animated pictures, which the commendable taste of the Winkles had preserved from the modern invasion of paste and gaudy paper. On one side might be seen a party of the early settlers falling into an ambush of the savages; a sketch of one of Cromwell's battles with the royalists; and then the execution of the conscientious Episcopalian, the unfortunate Charles. On the opposite side were landscapes—chasing and angling; and over them, with their frames reaching to the ceiling, were half a score of portraits of the Winkle family.

A monastic silence reigned in the hall. A king Charles spaniel lay upon the floor, with his head between his feet, as if patiently awaiting the arrival of his master. The crickets came out, but did not sing. A mouse ran noiselessly under the green settee without attracting the notice of Dew, whose eyes only wandered from the broad, bright rods on the stairway to the huge lock of the front door, without observing that the arms of the red warriors were in motion; that Cromwell's unhelmeted brow was assuming a darker frown; that the lips of the royal victim on the scaffold were moving in prayer; that the panting buck was actually shaking his antlers in defiance, and that the floundering trout on the greensward really seemed to be opening and closing his gills—which might have been easily perceived by any gazer sufficiently imaginative.

But although the illuminated hall was so still and silent, one apartment, among the many the old mansion contained, exhibited no deficiency of animation or mirthfulness. This was the sitting-room of the family. It had large bookcases

well stored with volumes, in three of its corners, and in the fourth, in the good old style, was a fireplace filled with fresh boughs from the umbrageous trees in the yard.

Mrs. Winkle, a portly widow of some five and fifty years, sat in her great high-backed chair beside a dark mahogany centre-table. On the opposite side was seated one of the tolerated gossips of the town, a retired milliner, a pale, small woman, something beyond thirty years of age, with thin lips and a Roman nose, but with an humble expression of eye, and a soft insinuating voice—particularly when in the presence of any of her old patrons. Mrs. Winkle had in former years contributed liberally to the worldly acquisitions of Miss Gusset; and the latter, for certain reasons, which will appear, was not in readiness to repay the obligations she owed with the ingratitude so generally returned for benefits conferred.

"Sit still, Gusset," said Mrs. Winkle, smiling, and clipping off the curl of the wick of the spermaceti candle.

"Thank you, Mrs. Winkle," said Gusset, recomposing herself on the chair, from which she had been about to rise. "It will afford me pleasure to stay, if my company is agreeable, until they come It is quite time they were here,"—she continued, drawing forth a huge gold watch, pending from which were several seals, and a most ponderous pencil case,—"a whole quarter past the usual time, I declare! I hope no serious accident has happened. If so, I know they'll regret not coming in the early boat; and I'm sure I haven't the least conception why they staid for the late one, unless they didn't wish to be seen in my company. But they needn't have alarmed themselves—I had a book ——"

"Bravo, Gusset! I thought something had occurred to wound your sensitive little heart. You have hardly spoken ten words during the last hour, and I doubt whether you have been listening to my diverting histories of the parvenue aristocrats of Babbleton. You have not laughed as usual. Pooh, Gusset! You know there is nothing in this world I hate so much as a grave displeased visage. Relax your blond features and tell me the whole story."

"It's a very short one, Mrs. Winkle, and I don't think it will give you pleasure to hear it. I never like to allude to any thing unpleasant before you; you who were born with a smile, as the Honorable Mr. Winkle used to say, and will die with one on your lips ——"

"I hope so, Gusset," said Mrs. Winkle, still smiling, although tearlets sparkled in the corners of her eyes. "It is better to laugh than to cry; and I believe it is quite as acceptable to our Maker. I will really strive to be cheerful to the last. They say I have been as mirthful since the loss of our fortune as before. I'm glad of it. Ha! ha! ha! The idea of laughing on one's death-bed! Well! Suppose one is at peace with Heaven, and has no burden on the conscience? A smiling corpse! Really I think it would be better thus to strengthen the hopes of the beholders of such spectacles, than to chill them with horror. Give me wax candles and beautiful bouquets. But go on, Gusset—tell me what happened in the city to-day."

"We had a most delightful time going down. The day was beautiful and the company pleasant. Lucy was as gay as an oriole—— "

"My daughter, you know, is what is termed a 'chip of the old block.'"

"La, Mrs. Winkle, you are not old! You could pass for thirty. And Mr. Winkle —— "

"Call my son Walter, or you will certainly make me feel old. A boy recently out of college called Mr.!"

"Walter was charming —— "

"Who was *he* charming?"

"Miss Virginia Oakland, as sure as my name is Griselda Gusset!"

"Nonsense—mere child's play! Go on."

"Mr Ralph Roland is thirty five, I'm sure—so *he's* no child. Well, he played against Walter, and Walter won."

"Pooh! Some people think Roland is playing for Lucy. If I thought so, I'd soon put a stop to the game!"

"Why, after Mr. Plastic, and the emperor—I mean your brother in-law, Mr. Napoleon Winkle—he is thought to be the richest man in the country."

"No matter, Lucy's heart is above all price. Never marry for money, Gusset."

"Not I! My income, from what I have been able to lay up with your aid, and the patronage of others, is enough to keep me comfortable, and independent, too! When we got to the city, Mr. Roland walked with us until we met your sister-in-law—the princess, *I* call her—Miss *Wilsome* Winkle—and you *know* she's sixty."

"No such thing, Gusset—no such thing."

"La! didn't I hear you say so yourself the other day, when the emperor—I mean Mr. Napoleon Winkle—her brother, said it would be impolite to marry before his sister, who was two years older than himself?"

"I said she would be sixty in six weeks, and it has been only three since then," replied the widow, laughing very heartily. "And you met Miss Wilsome while Roland was with you? I wonder she spoke at all."

"If you could have heard her speak! You know what a raven-like voice she has—but I'm sure she can't help it—and with that, such as it was, she said, taking Lucy by the arm, 'Come away, child, from that horrible brute!' And she actually forced Lucy to go with her!"

"Ha! ha! ha! Just like Wilsome. You imitate her perfectly. What did Roland say?"

"Not a word. But he ran into the middle of the street and jumped into an omnibus."

"Where was Walter?"

"With Virginia, behind, laughing himself half to death."

"Every body knows Wilsome's strange ways. No one cares what she says or does."

"Nor herself either. I'm sure Mr. Ralph Roland is perfectly gentlemanly in his manners, a handsome man, and as rich as——"

"Riches are nothing in Wilsome's estimation."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Winkle, if I venture to think differently. I am convinced that if I had been rich, she wouldn't have wished to shake me off as she did!"

"Why, Gusset, have you not just been saying that Roland was rich, and that she almost thrust him into the middle of the street?"

"It's a mystery. I can't unravel it."

"I can. He grievously offended her [redacted]. How do you suppose, now, he incurred her displeasure? You could never guess. Accompanying some ladies a[redacted] mansion one night, it being late, for they had [redacted] whist, he chanced to tread upon her white tom-cat's [redacted]. The animal scratched his ankle, and not knowing exactly what it was, for the lady had screamed and overturned the wax candles (she will not have gas), he kicked violently, and killed poor Tom. She has never forgiven him, for she has not yet been able to

obtain another cat of the same color and disposition. Roland has had some twenty white kittens under the tuition of his housekeeper, and does not despair of achieving a reconciliation. But how did Wilsome look? how was she dressed?"

"I cannot help it, Mrs. Winkle, but really it is painful to look at her. You know I am a simple and an humble woman, grateful for all the favors you and your family have bestowed on me, and ever conscious of my low origin and inferiority. Of course I could never be so vile as to say an ill-natured or malicious thing against any one who assisted me in the time of my need; or against any of their friends or connections. Yet when such as you, who know my inoffensive disposition, ask my candid opinion on any subject, I feel bound to give it. Then, as to Miss Wilsome's form, it is a very good one. Her shape is, indeed, elegant, and sets off a dress to perfection. And her feet and hands are very fine. But she walks more and more on her heels as she grows older, and it can be perceived that her knuckles become more bony. Her face—bless us!—why it is plastered over with paint; and yet such crow's feet and wrinkles are seen below her eyes—her enormous eyes—down her cheeks and along her neck, that every one who beholds her is shocked, absolutely stunned. We feel, alas! that art cannot conceal the frightful inroads of age; and it is a very melancholy thought, Mrs. Winkle, for we are all growing older every day."

"But just now, Gusset, you were complimenting me——"

"Oh, *you* don't show age, because you are always merry. I wish I could grow fat, too!"

"You must be merry, first. Yet my sister Wilsome is often very merry."

"I fear it is only on the surface, madam; a mere imitation of the young miss, and it is horrible to witness it. But forgive me. I would not give offence for the world. And I declare when one sees Miss Wilsome's form without looking at her face, she might pass for a reigning belle; for she is always arrayed in the most beautiful and costly apparel. It is fashionable too. Indeed she generally has an extra flounce or so, and I am sure I do not blame her for turning her eyes away when the young gentlemen in the street are attracted by her gay exterior, and have an idle curiosity to survey her features. Several such impertinents followed us many squares; sometimes coming up even with her, and finding her face al-

ways averted when their eyes were turned towards it, there was nothing left for them but to fall back again, and admire her magnificent form. She did right no doubt to mock them thus. I do not blame her for not gratifying their idle curiosity."

"I am afraid, Gusset, you were just then a little inc
What motive can any woman have for displaying a f
and rich attire, and at the same time concealing from
mirers that may be attracted the face of the proprietor?
she be known, how can she reap any of the credit?
why go to the expense, and take the pains?"

"The pains! True, Mrs. Winkle, for I heard her d
she was in an agony. She said her corns were throbbi
every step. I declare, as you say, I cannot see the re.
But motive or no motive, I have known other ladies to do
same thing. And you know, as soon as Miss Wilsome
within your door, she will, as usual, call for her easy slip
Still, you must not suppose she was harsh to me. Oh n
The moment after we entered her fine mansion, and the door closed behind us, she turned round and almost smothered me with caresses. To think she should shake both my hands for five minutes, as if we had just met, when we had been walking together more than a mile! Oh h and she had every thing nice—cakes and wine. She is no pr[illegible]ory disciple; but it isn't wine that gives her such a color. 'Come, Gusset, I am really rejoiced to see you,' croaked she, 'take it, dear'—as the silver salver paused before me—'be at home in my house, be happy,' and so on."

"Gusset, that was Christian treatment."

"No doubt. Just as many Christians act. Sisters at the communion table—haughty despisers in the street. How I long to be rich and in high station, just to give an example to the world——"

"To the world, Gusset? But tell me how Wilsome incurred your displeasure."

"Forgive me, Mrs. Winkle; I meant Babbleton, and not the whole world. Miss Wilsome was very kind, very, indeed—too kind! Never had I such sumptuous entertainment before—never before so splendid a dinner—all ordered I believe from a restaurant's, and costing at least five dollars. And when the time came to depart, Miss Wilsome, for the first time, let me know she intended to return with Lucy, and

that they would wait for the late boat. But she would put me to no inconvenience on her account. Oh no! she would not detain *me*—she was sorry to be separated—but she would soon have the pleasure of my company again, at Babbleton."

"Ha! ha! ha! And so she will, Gusset."

"And when I was endeavoring to get in a word to the effect that I was quite at leisure, and altogether disposed to pass the remainder of the day in the city, she was as deaf as a post, and rattled away with—'My dear Gusset, I hope your interests may not suffer in consequence of the time we have detained you here. But I am so fond of your company, and it has been so long since we met, that I could not bear to part with you. You shall not lose by it, Gusset. I hope your apprentices will not do any mischief in your absence—and that no customers may be lost on my account. Now do not, dear, good Gusset, be offended at me for having kept you from your business so long—and when you get home, Gusset dear, let sister Winkle know that I have Walter and Lucy in charge, and that I will be with her to-night, and shall have a rubber at whist.' That's the way she ran on! Just as if she didn't know I had long since closed my shop! and before I could reply to her she pushed me out of the room with an attempt to kiss my cheek!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"You *may* laugh, for it was fancied. And here is a print of her rouge on my ribbon, and you can see the wrinkles in it, as plainly as you can see the dirt on the frog-catcher's face!"

"Who is the frog-catcher?"

"Why the march-boy, as they call him, who lives in the ditches on Mr. Napoleon Winkle's estate. He hunts terrapins, mushrooms, and such things for the emperor and Sergeant Blore. Have you never seen Bill Dizzle?"

"Oh, yes, and I pity him."

"He's the happiest person I know. There they are!" cried Gusset, rising, as Dew was heard to bark furiously in the hall.

"Sit still, Gusset," said Mrs. Winkle, "Biddy will open the door."

A few moments after, Biddy entered softly.

"Who is it?" asked her mistress.

"Dill Bizzle, ma'm."

"Dill Bizzle?"

"She means Bill Dizzle," said Gusset. "You know Biddy always blunders in her speech. But I felt sure it was Miss Wilsome and Lucy."

"Biddy, tell him to come in," said Mrs. Winkle.

"Yes, ma'm," replied Biddy, withdrawing into the hall, where the boy was in waiting. Immediately after the maid uttered a loud cry, and ran into the room screaming frightfully. Having flung the door wide open, Bill Dizzle appeared in view. He wore an old cap, its original color obliterated, and the material of which it had been constructed, unknown. His carroty hair hung in long locks down his neck, behind and over his ears. His thin face, as usual, was bespeckled with the mud of the marshes. His forehead was low, his eyes small, gray and twinkling; his nose short and broad; his mouth wide, and his lips sufficiently parted to exhibit a most formidable array of teeth. He wore a yellow homespun sack, girdled round with a black leather belt. His pantaloons and boots were, of course, of the color of the last ditch he had plunged into.

"What have you there?" demanded Mrs. Winkle, smiling encouragingly, and gazing at a rod in the boy's hand, upon which was strung a row of what might have been taken for the hind quarters of squirrels, nicely prepared for the kitchen. "Are they a present from my brother, or Sergeant Blore?"

The boy replied by an affirmative nod, and a smile.

"Are they squirrels?"

The boy shook his head, but continued to smile.

"Oh, la!" cried Biddy, finding the power of utterance again, which had been suspended, "Missus! don't you see what they be? Look at the little hands! La's a' mercy on us!"

"Little hands! What do you mean, Biddy?"

"Yes, hands! Look at 'em. Baby's poor, dear little hands! He's been murdering little babies not bigger nor rats. See the precious little things' limbs and hands!"

"She's a fool!" said Bill Dizzle, without ceasing to smile, and holding up the rod horizontally before him. "They are sweeterer and tenderer nor chickens, and the emperor and the sergeant are now eating the other half."

"The arms and heads of the babies!" cried Biddy.

"No, I had two rodsful o' green frogs——."

"Frogs? so they are!" said Mrs. Winkle, approaching the boy. "Take them into the kitchen, Biddy."

"Not for the wide world, mam!" cried Biddy. "I couldn't do it, if it was to save me."

"Nor would I eat them," said Mrs. Winkle, turning to Gusset. "But they must be politely accepted. Here, Dizzle," she continued, "is something for your trouble. Be kind enough to leave them with the cook."

Bill nodded and started away, but paused suddenly, and turning round, said abruptly, "And I come to let you know the boat that's got on board your darter and the emperor's sister, shied on to a bar, and 'll have to stay till the next tide, which is jest beginning now. They'll soon be here. I was putting out my trot line and saw the ladies."

"That is the cause of the delay, Gusset," said Mrs. Winkle. "But I hear the steamer's bell at the landing. They will be here in a few minutes." And soon after Dew was barking joyously.

CHAPTER II.

THE GAME BEGUN. THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.

The arrival of Miss Wilsome and Lucy produced a general commotion throughout the establishment. They were accompanied by Mr. Jonathan Dowly, an old bachelor, who had been one among the numerous competitors for the hand of Miss Edith Blount, some thirty-five years before the date of the events recorded in this history. Submitting in silence to the victory of his rival (the late Mr. Winkle), he had abandoned the city, and lived ever afterwards in seclusion and solitude near the village of Babbleton, contenting himself with dreamy visions of his first and only love. He was never known to smile except when in the company of Mrs. Winkle, or some member of the family. Lucy was a perfect duplicate, in mercantile parlance, of what her mother had been when young; and Mr. Dowly, happening to be returning from the city on the same boat, and seeing the aunt and niece unaccompanied by a protector, had ventured timidly to make a tender of his services, which had a ready acceptance on the part of Lucy.

"Stop, Gusset—don't go yet, that's a good creature," said Miss Wilsome, forcing the retired milliner back into her chair. "I made some shameful blunders to-day. Lucy has been telling me. You must forgive it; I had forgotten that you were no longer in business. It would have been so pleasant to have had you at dinner with us—for we had no company—and your conversation on the wearisome boat would have been a great relief. I hope you are quite comfortable, now."

"I thank you, Miss Wilsome, and your munificent family, for the little independence I enjoy. My wants are few, and expenses light. I ought to be satisfied with the moderate means I possess. I am an humble body, and must never forget what I once was. I *am* not worthy of having any apologies bestowed on me—but since you have so condescended, I am thankful."

"Good Gusset—that's a kind creature! Now stay to tea, and afterwards we'll have whist. I'm so glad you have no girls to watch over at home. Sister, invite Gusset to stay to tea."

"Certainly, she will oblige us," responded Mrs. Winkle, who had been insisting upon Mr. Dowly's remaining likewise. "But Wilsome, what have you done with Walter, and Virginia Oakland, and Mr. Roland?"

"Oh, I made Walter stay to take care of my house. The burglars are breaking in somewhere every night. The maids get too ungovernable if left to themselves——"

"I hope you don't suppose Walter can keep them in order?"

"He can tell me if they misbehave."

"He can if he will."

"Will! *my* will governs in *my* house. But the principal reason why I left him in charge of my establishment, is that I want him to keep my coach in motion every day until the horses are thoroughly tamed. My housemaid, my coachman, and my horses are all spoilt by indulgence in idle habits. Do you know I have not rode in my own coach for a month? The last time I was out, I thought the horses were going to mount up in the air, like the mythological teams we read of at school. They pranced and reared so outrageously, that I had to call a policeman. My man Snapper could not control them. Walter seemed delighted with the proposition; and the Oakland rosebud is to stay several days in the city

with her aunt. I don't know what became of the beast Roland after I sent him to Coventry. Of course, Gusset has told you how that was."

"I hope, Wilsome, Walter will be wise enough to take care of himself," remarked Mrs. Winkle, gravely.

"I gave him particular instructions, and of course he will regulate his habits accordingly. Has your old beau consented to stay to tea? But no matter; he never could play. Yet, he is as silent as a sarcophagus. He didn't speak a dozen words on the boat—but just laughed with his eyes at Lucy. There was, however, a very gentlemanly somebody smitten with us. I have seen him at Madame R.'s, but don't know him. He shifted his position continually, but never got a front view of me. I wonder why the men are never contented with the aspect presented them! But here's the tea. Lucy must wait on her ancient beau. I have not heard his voice to-night."

And Lucy did so very assiduously. She spread the snowy napkin on Mr. Dowly's lap, and held the sugar-dish for him, while he helped himself in silence. Mr. Dowly was past sixty and quite gray. His form was tall, slight, and quite erect for one of his age. His face was very pale, and the texture of the skin almost as delicate as a lady's. His eyes were large, very dark and expressive; but beneath them were huge, wrinkled cavities. His mouth generally protruded into a wo-begone, melancholy expression. But his nose was large and finely shaped, redeeming many of the traces of time and sorrow on his manly countenance. His dress was remarkable: he wore sometimes a blue coat, made thirty years before, and sometimes a brown one, fabricated fifteen years after the blue one, and both seemed to be as bright and free from the evidences of dilapidation as when they issued from the hands of the tailor. His hat, too, although shining in aspect, belonged to a former generation; and, in accordance with the good old fashion, his neckerchief was of a snowy whiteness. Poor old Mr. Dowly had deeply loved Miss Blount, and never sought the smiles of any other. He had been rejected for Mr. Winkle; but it produced no other sensation in his breast than that of melancholy regret. He had never ceased to gaze with pleasure on Mrs. Winkle, and, as we have said, never smiled except when in the presence of some member of her family. In his dreams he was always young again, and Miss Blount

unmarried. By day he lived in the past; scenes and sentiments of former years filled his reveries. He had always been in the habit of occasionally visiting the family, but was ever a silent guest, unless compelled to respond to the friendly words addressed him. He had not been a more frequent visitor in the days of Mrs. Winkle's widowhood than during the lifetime of her husband. It was too late in life to renew his addresses, and he preferred his accustomed contemplations of the past to any of the realities of life which might now be presented to him. He lived on a small farm, a short distance from town, employing a careful Welsh housekeeper and an industrious gardener, her son. His circumstances had been good; but no one now knew any thing of his fortune. Most people believed him to be poor, simply because they never knew him to incur any expense that might be avoided. Whatever investments he had were in the city, and of course they were past finding out, since he never spoke of his affairs to his neighbors.

Lucy being called away by her aunt, who was arranging the preliminaries for the rubber at whist, Mrs. Winkle occupied the seat vacated by her daughter, and seemed inclined to engage her old beau in a conversation. The old gentleman's large dark eyes were immediately illuminated.

"Here, we sit together again, Mr. Dowly, just as we did thirty years ago. It seems to me very wonderful that at the completion of three decades, after the many storms of the world, and all the vicissitudes of life, you and I, and a few others should be left together upon the shore of time, while so many we knew, younger than ourselves, and apparently with stronger constitutions, have vanished from the scene for ever."

Mr. Dowly made no reply, but assented by the liquid eloquence of his eyes, and a shrug of his shoulders.

"I strive to be cheerful, Mr. Dowly," resumed the widow, "and find it more pleasant to laugh than to repine. I see in my daughter a counterpart of myself, when at her age ——"

"She's beautiful—lovely—good," said Mr. Dowly.

"Ha! ha! ha! Precisely what you said of me, some thirty years ago! And believe me it is as gratifying to hear it now, as it was then. You never reproached me for the preference I gave Mr. Winkle."

"He was a preferable man. Different from the rest of his family. He was my friend, and I his."

"And I should be sorry to think you have been unhappy. I wonder you did not marry."

"No; I have been very happy. I live in the past. My thoughts by day—my dreams by night; and so it shall be to the end. I am glad I never married. I never will marry. But you will let me be your friend. That is all I ask."

"Most certainly."

"And Lucy; she may want a friend."

"How? Oh; you mean my lamented husband died a bankrupt. But have we not friends? There's sister Wilsome and my brother-in-law—both unmarried like yourself, and the last worth a million, and as generous as the prince he supposes himself to be, in his fits of strange hallucination."

"I hope they may be always mindful of their duty. I have no relations. This property, I believe, is all your husband left."

"All. Ha! ha! ha! Small as it seems, the few acres attached are made to yield me a large revenue, I assure you, by the industry of good old Dibble and his son David, the gardeners."

"You are fortunate in the Dibbles. But is not the place encumbered by a mortgage?"

"I believe so; but my brother Napoleon attends to the interest. I really don't know who holds the mortgage."

"I do; but no matter. Only this—if you should ever have a serious necessity for the use of funds, which your family may be slow in offering, don't forget John Dowly. Nobody knows any thing in relation to that old man's pecuniary means, and no one has any right to know—but you. Don't forget him."

"Forget you! How can that be possible? For the last twenty years not a week has gone by, that some little present has not come to our house to remind us of the existence and uniform kindness of good John Dowly. The only difficulty is, how to repay with gratitude the munificence of our generous friend."

"Forget that! forget that! I am benefited more than any body else; only do not forbid me—do not reject them, and I shall continue to be happy. Good night! good night! My horse and carriage are at the inn. The moon shines

brightly, just as it did when I was young. I am merry. Good night." And the old man departed, his large brilliant eyes glistening the more from the slight humidity that pervaded them.

"How shall we contrive it?" asked Wilsome, seated in a rocking chair near the table, and addressing Lucy in relation to the proposed game.

"Let me see," responded Lucy, archly. "Ma, you know, has an aversion to the grave silence imposed on the players. You have often said she was too merry for whist. Gusset plays very well; but should there not be a man among us?"

"There should be. I forgot that when I made Walter stay in town. But who would have supposed there was not a single man to be had in all Babbleton?"

"There are an abundance of single men here," said Mrs. Winkle, smiling.

"Deuce take the bachelors! I mean a single gentleman, married or unmarried, for one's partner at whist. I can't play with a lady partner. Why, Lucy, have you no beaux? Don't blush so, child! Really, you begin to look like a woman. Behold her, sister; she is taller than you, and yours was a good height. See her broad shoulders, her almost Juno neck, her full rounded bust, her ivory forehead, her cloud of dark chestnut hair, her beautifully flushing cheeks, the white and red contending for the mastery! I never noticed her before. She is a lovely creature!"

"Aunt Wilsome!" responded Lucy, laughing heartily. "What should I do if I were to hear some gentleman utter such a speech?"

"Do? Why, if he were one approved by your family—which, never forget, is a good one—you might recline your head on his shoulder, and surrender your heart. But never be precipitate; ten years hence will be time enough. You see *I* am in no hurry. Still, I think you are old enough, and handsome enough to have beaux. At least some visitor capable of playing whist as my partner. Is there no such one?"

"There is a gentleman living in the white cottage opposite, who sometimes visits Walter, and who remarked last evening that the game was a sensible one."

"He's a sensible man. Who is he, Gusset?"

"A mysterious person. He has been here only a few

months; no one yet visits him but Mr. Walter, and he goes nowhere, except occasionally, to return Walter's visits. But he is handsome, and only about twenty-five. He is tall, pale, and sometimes very sad."

"What is he doing here? Has he no profession, no business?"

"It seems not. He has taken the cottage, and brought some furniture and a great many books from New York."

"Does he live alone?"

"He has an old housekeeper, he brought with him—and she is English, for she says ouse instead of house, and hair instead of air."

"How does he dress? What sort of feet and hands?"

"His clothes are very genteel—but not foppish. His feet and hands are small and handsome, the latter very white"

"So! He is either a gentleman, or a black-leg, or forger, or fugitive, or something of the sort. What do you think, Lucy?"

"I *know* him to be a gentleman, aunt—and an educated gentleman, who has been accustomed to the best society. He has read every great author, and is very agreeable in conversation. He is a musician too, and sings delightfully."

"Oh, I see you like him. I don't think he can be one of the opera troupe. What's his name?"

"Lowe—Edmund Lowe," said Gusset. "But surely he won't play cards with us——"

"Why?" demanded Miss Wilsome, abruptly.

"Because, one Sunday, when the rector's wife was taken suddenly ill, and her husband was sent for, Mr. Lowe, stranger as he was, stepped forward and offered to read the service. Surely he won't play cards!"

"That don't follow. But did he read?"

"He did indeed," said Mrs. Winkle, "and I never heard the prayers better read in my life."

"That will do. Send for Mr. Lowe to be my partner."

Lucy whispered to Biddy, the message she wished to be delivered. A few minutes after, Mr. Lowe was ushered in, and introduced with due formality to the old maid, whose partner he became without the slightest hesitation.

"I'm afraid you will repent of your complaisance," said Lucy to Mr. Lowe, who sat at her elbow while her aunt shuffled the cards. "My aunt plays very patiently——"

"Of course I do," said Miss Wilsome; "the game loses its interest when neglected."

"I am very fond of the game, and have been called a good player," replied, Mr. Lowe.

"I'm glad to hear you say so," said Miss Wilsome, secretly planning to employ as much of his time as possible during her stay at Babbleton.

"My aunt sometimes indulges in long sittings," pursued Lucy, with an arch glance at the composed features of the gentleman.

"I frequently retire at three in the morning, and rise at eleven," was the imperturbable reply.

"You are the very partner I want!" cried Miss Wilsome.

"Fortunate sister," said Mrs. Winkle, laughing; "but you must have pity on Lucy. If she remains awake too long after the usual hour of going to rest, she will have shocking eyes the next day."

"There is too much brilliant fire sparkling in them now," said Miss Wilsome, "to be dimmed so easily."

"I declare, Mr. Lowe," said Lucy, "my aunt has done nothing but compliment me ever since this game was proposed."

"Pay attention to your cards, Lucy, and assort them before you begin. It is Mr. Lowe's lead," said Miss Wilsome.

"How could she do otherwise?" was Mr. Lowe's calm response, whilst leading a trump.

"That's the knave, I believe," said Miss Wilsome, staring at the card. Her vision was impaired by age, but it was observed that she never used her glasses when unmarried gentlemen played with her. "Sir, you do me honor," she continued, with her lips contracted into a simper.

"But it's my trick!" said Gusset, triumphantly, playing the ace.

Before the first game was ended, a tremendous explosion was heard in the distance, and was followed quickly by a succession of startling reports.

"Bless my life! What's that?" cried Miss Wilsome, springing up from her chair, and running to a window. "See that flash! Just listen!" she continued.

"It is a salute," said Mr. Lowe, joining Miss Wilsome. "I did not know there was a ship of war in the river."

"Nor I either," said Mrs. Winkle, smiling. "Indeed I know there is no such ship in this vicinity."

"Is there a fort in the neighborhood?" asked Mr. Lowe.

"No!" responded Miss Wilsome, angrily, and returning to the table. "Take up your cards. It is only my crazy brother. He should be confined in a madhouse when those fits are on him."

"Your brother?" asked Mr. Lowe.

"Yes, sir. Is it possible he has been quiet since you have been residing here, so that you have not heard all about him? Yes, it is my brother Napoleon Winkle. He is a monomaniac on the subject of Bonaparte's campaigns—in other matters he is rational enough."

"He is an amiable, generous, noble-minded man," said Gusset, with emphasis, though timidly.

"Why, Gusset, what do you know about him?" asked Miss Wilsome, fixing her large searching eyes upon the retired milliner, and then, seeing Mr. Lowe evinced some interest in the subject, she continued: "My brother, although really eighteen months younger than myself, and still a bachelor, is proprietor of one of the largest estates in the county, which was mostly inherited from our father, who divided his fortune equally between his three children. Napoleon, preferring land to money, holds the old homestead plantation, which he has most singularly divided and subdivided into tracts after the plan of the map of Europe. Every state of Europe, whether empire, kingdom, principality or duchy, may be found on his farm. Of course he resides in France. He reads nothing that does not glorify his great model; and so fascinated has he become with the bloody career of that detestable butcher, that he sometimes fancies that the spirit of the conquering demon has been transmitted to him, and animates his corpulent body! He has been told that he resembles Bonaparte—and he really does look like the prints of him—and of course that fact exercises a powerful influence over his imagination. He has likewise picked up somewhere an old sergeant—one legged, one armed, and one eyed—who served under the Emperor, believes he was a God, and that his soul has taken up its abode in the breast of my poor brother. They have a perfect identity of ideas and feelings; and so they have erected little forts in the countries they fancy they have subjugated, and ever and anon they cele-

brate the anniversary of some one of their victories. That is the solution of this startling rumpus to-night. I dare say my sister Winkle there, who is turning over the leaves of Alison's history, will soon be able to tell us what battle occurred on this day of the month. The magistrates of the county ought to put a stop to such a ridiculous nuisance, for the whole country is often startled and shocked at an unexpected moment by such Quixotic operations."

"All the justices in the state would not venture to attack the good man," said Gusset.

"Gusset, you are the only one I ever saw who was willing to defend my brother—and truly he does not need any one to defend him. No doubt if the officers were to approach his premises for the avowed purpose of suppressing his amusements, he would conceive them to be invaders from some hostile country, and would send bombs and grape-shot in their midst. He has eight or ten old cannons, large and small, and a mortar or two. In one of his engagements he had a horse killed under him——"

"You mean an imaginary horse, Miss Winkle?" remarked Mr. Lowe.

"No indeed! He was fighting over the battle of Lodi—forgetting, I believe, that the first Napoleon was then on foot—when one of the old pieces, which Sergeant Blore was firing with a slow match—himself out of danger—burst into a thousand pieces. The horse was torn to atoms, while the rider remained unhurt. Then the sergeant embraced his master, and called him the 'Little Corporal!'"

"Never have I heard of the actual existence of so singular a character," said Mr. Lowe. "It reminds me of Sterne's fictitious Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim."

"Yes. And often have I told my brother that he was a plagiarist; but he assured me upon his honor that he had never read a word of Sterne, and it cannot be denied that he is a man of strict veracity and honor. But he banished me from his territories for even suggesting such a thing. He called me a meddling Madame de Stael, and told me, most imperiously, to go and perform my true mission as a woman, letting politics alone!"

"Ha! ha! Just like Napoleon the first," said Mrs. Winkle. "But here it is! It is the anniversary of the battle of

Marengo, and it appears the victory over the Austrians was not complete until after nightfall. Poor uncle Toby!"

"I do not think, Ma," said Lucy, "that uncle Winkle copies Sterne's hero. He does not fight with jack-boots, and there is no widow in the case."

"No, truly," said Gusset. "And I've often heard Mr. Winkle say no widow could ever carry his heart."

"And you remember the saying?" interrogated Miss Wilsome, darting a glance at the milliner. "My brother, I suppose, has no notion of marrying at all, at least not immediately."

"No, aunt," said Lucy. "He has often said he would wait until after the celebration of your nuptials."

"And, my pretty niece, that may occur sooner than you suppose. But if it should not, pray don't let it be a restraint upon you."

"Oh, mercy, aunt!"

"Then don't meddle with sharp instruments. What amuses my partner? He is almost convulsed. Pay attention, sir! Gusset would not have won that 'trick,' as she calls it, but for your inattention. Being third in play, you should have secured it."

"But I have the honors, and we win the game. I was thinking of an incident I witnessed during the battle of Buena Vista, which our resumption of the game brought to mind."

"Were you in that battle?" asked Lucy.

"Oh yes. Merely as a spectator. I have been a wanderer —a——"

"The incident—the incident," said Miss Wilsome, dealing the cards.

"The mounted regiment from Kentucky, as you must be aware——" began Mr. Lowe.

"No, I did not read a word of the war, because I was opposed to it."

"The Kentuckians were ordered to maintain a certain position. After every charge they returned to the ground specified. That their horses might continue in wind, the riders, after every attack, dismounted, and choosing partners, sat down and played cards on the ground. And I noticed that whenever the order came for them to mount and charge the hostile lancers, each one put down his cards, the trumps carefully concealed at the bottom. And when they returned

if the amusement had not been forestalled by the loss of a partner—and I believe one in every five of the regiment fell—the game was resumed with a nonchalance equal to our own after the cannonading we heard just now."

"Well, Biddy? well? What do you want?" asked Mrs. Winkle, seeing her maid open the door leading into the hall, and standing in a hesitating attitude.

"It's Dill Bizzle, mam."

"Bill Dizzle, she means," said Lucy, smiling at the habitual blunder of Biddy.

"What does he bring, now? Mushrooms or terrapins?"

"It's in a bag, mam—and he sis it's for Miss Milsop."

"*Wilsome*—you stupid dunce!" cried Miss Winkle, her temples as red as her cheeks. "Remember that, Biddy. It is the second time you have made that blunder. Let it be the last."

"Ye—s mam."

"I don't like to be called *mam*, either. But what has the boy brought me? Tell him to come here with it. With your permission, Mr. Lowe." Mr. Lowe bowed his assent.

Dizzle was ushered in with a bag on his arm. In vain it was conjectured what its contents might be. Lucy retired to the furthest corner of the room, and her mother did not approach nearer to the messenger or his mysterious burden.

"What in the world is it?" demanded Miss Wilsome, in a loud voice.

"I'll show him," said Dizzle, with his invariable smile, striving for some length of time ineffectually to dislodge the object from the sack.

"Mercy on us! It moves! Is it alive?" cried Lucy.

"In course he's alive," said Dizzle, violently jerking up the closed end of the sack, and forcibly extricating the animal.

It was a beautiful white cat. And it stood quite motionless in their midst, and during the breathless silence that ensued, gazed round in utter bewilderment at the strange faces. It then uttered a piteous cry, and walked slowly towards Miss Wilsome, who sprang upon it with spasmodic delight and hugged it in her arms.

"It's my poor Tom, or his ghost!" cried she.

"He's one of the family, and jest as good as the old Tom," said Dizzle.

"Poor puss!" continued Miss Wilsome, delighted to see the pet appreciating her caresses, "where in the world did it come from? Excuse me, Mr. Lowe, but I had a cat I loved so much—he died—or was cruelly murdered by a dog named Roland—and this is a perfect picture of him. Who sent it to me, Dizzle? Here's a dollar for you."

"He told me, before I told you, you must tell me——"

"I must tell you?"

"If it was going to make you mad."

"Mad? Why no! If—if—if it is only another—like the one I had," continued Miss Wilsome, gazing affectionately at the humming and purring creature—"I mean if it should be another——"

"Don't you see it's another?" responded Dizzle. "Jest as much like your old Tom as two peas—not a black hair on him—and not a bit wicious!"

"I mean, Dizzle, if it has the same name—and the same disposition—and——"

"His name's Tom, and in course—— Mr. Roland said you'd as soon have a nanny goat about your house as a biddy cat. He's a innocent fellow, too, *I* know."

"You think he never murdered a mouse?" asked Mr. Lowe, which was succeeded by half suppressed explosions of laughter from Lucy and her mother.

"Dizzle!" continued Miss Wilsome, "if Mr. Roland sent me this pet, tell him he has made amends for his unlucky act—and that I forgive him. Go now, Dizzle. Mr. Lowe, please excuse me for desiring to postpone the game until to-morrow. You can have no conception of the deep interest I take in the poor dumb domestic animals which are generally so cruelly treated. I am aware of the censure I incur; but I defy the scandal of idle tongues. Good-by, Gusset. But whatever affords us any degree of happiness, however insignificant the object which produces it may appear, should not be despised."

Mr. Lowe assented readily to the proposition, remarking that one of his aunts had been so fond of a poodle as to carry it always in her carriage, and she made it a rule to kiss the dear little creature every night before retiring to rest. He then took his leave; and Miss Wilsome, giving full vent to her long pent up affection, almost distracted poor Tom with her infinite fund of endearments.

CHAPTER III.

ON A LARK—WALTER—THE STUDENT—THE POET.

Left sole master of his aunt's establishment in the city, young Winkle resolved, as most young gentlemen of his age and disposition would have done, to make the most of his opportunity, and reap the greatest possible amount of enjoyment from the means and time placed at his disposal. Therefore, no sooner had his aunt and sister departed for the boat, than he tossed the book he had been reading—"The Mirror of Moral Propriety," written for the edification of credulous dupes—to the farthest extremity of the parlor, and leaning back, rang the bell very violently.

"Tell Snapper to have the carriage at the door as soon as possible," was the young man's order to the housemaid, who gazed with eager curiosity.

"Iss, sir."

"And when you have done that, Rose, come back to me. I shall want you."

"Iss, sir," responded the maid, springing away to do the young man's bidding.

Then Walter promenaded the magnificent saloon, with a proud step and a sounding heel. His hands were thrust into his pockets behind, and his eyes, disregarding the statuary and fine paintings surrounding him, were fixed upon the ceiling.

"If I could only meet with one of the fellows, now!" said he, "what a time we would have! If I thought my aunt would stay away several days—but she never knows herself—I could write to Princeton, or to New York, and get one or two——"

"Iss, sir," said Rose, standing before him at one of his turns, and dropping a slight courtesy.

"Oh, you told him, did you?"

"Iss, sir."

"All right, Rose. Rose, I suppose my aunt told you all that I was left master of the house?"

"Iss sir."

"And of course every one will do whatever I desire?"

"Oh iss, sir."

"Then tell the cook I may have company to a late supper; and if I do, I shall want at least five hundred oysters roasted in the shell. Is there any champagne in the cellar?"

"Iss, sir."

"See that the cobwebs are brushed off some half-a-dozen of the bottles."

"Iss, sir."

"I suppose my aunt don't smoke cigars?"

"Iss—Oh la, no, sir."

"Then I'll buy some. She gave me her purse. Let the bill for the oysters—and a brace of woodcock—be presented in the morning——"

"It can't be done, for it's onreasonable!" said the great fat colored cook, who had been listening in the hall, and now came boldly forward, as matters pertaining to her jurisdiction were discussed.

"Why, Griddle? Pray, why is it unreasonable?"

"Why? Why who ever heard of oysters at this season?"

"True—I didn't think of that."

"There's none but milky ones—and the cholera's bad enough without helping it any."

"True, Griddle. You are a philosopher. But what is there nice for me to invite a friend to, if I should meet with one?"

"Plenty. I can get woodcock, and if you can afford it—for Miss Wilsome wouldn't—I can get fresh salmon——"

"That's it. Get a dollar or so's worth. I hear the bell—see who it is, Rose. [Exit Rose.] Now, my good Griddle, I may rely on you?"

"That you may! Say nothing more about it. It does my heart good to see young people enjoy demselves in reason, if they behave demselves. And I saw old Snapper's eyes blinking, and his teeth grinning, as he went to the stable. It does our old hearts good to get a sight of the young gentry once in a while."

"Iss—it's the coach, sir."

"Is it down fore and aft? Stop, I can see through the blinds. Yes, all's right."

"Snapper'll do right!" said Griddle. "He'll have every

thing open and displayed in grand style. And he's got on his new coat with the silver buttons."

"Iss, and his new hat, with the broad silver lace band."

"I can't tell when I'll be back," said the young gentleman, pulling on his kid gloves. "But have the supper and the champagne ready when they are called for."

He then strode through the hall, and descended the flight of marble steps in front with the elasticity of buoyant youth enfranchised from every species of restraint, and exulting in the possession, as he supposed, of the means of commanding the most perfect happiness. No individual in the street of decent exterior escaped his eyes as he mounted into the luxuriantly cushioned carriage; and he was quite sure that no eye could withhold its admiring glance from his handsome person and brilliant equipage. Nevertheless Walter Winkle was not excessively vain, and he was now engaged in his first fit of extravagant folly, an indulgence mainly attributable to the reaction which sometimes follows a long imposed restraint, or is one of the incidents of healthful youth, and accompanying the exuberance of spirits so often inseparable from it.

Snapper had now an opportunity of taking off the wiry edge of his high-mettled and almost ungovernable horses. His whip sounded startlingly over their astonished ears. Their nostrils were turned out, their eyes emitted luminous rays, and their bits were covered with foam, before the expiration of the first hour of their exercises. Walter, alone in the carriage, reclining on the rear seat, had already traversed most of the fashionable thoroughfares, and had doubtless been stared at by thousands of dark flashing eyes, for the gay season at the watering-places had not yet commenced.

"Snapper!" cried Walter, as they were returning slowly through Chestnut street, and when opposite the custom house —"follow that man with the straw hat—the one with a blue coat and metal buttons. I think he's a friend of mine. Deuce take the omnibuses and drays——"

"The drays are loaded with kags of silver and gold," replied Snapper.

"And Uncle Sam's specie seems to be the only money in the country that passes too slowly. Can't you get round it some how? I'm afraid we'll lose the blue coat and brass buttons. I wish some of the Washington officials were here!"

Snapper succeeded in extricating the horses from the

throng, by dint of hard whipping, a commanding voice, and his silver lace and buttons, just in time to come up with the pedestrian when opposite the door of the American hotel.

"George Parke! Huzza!" cried Walter. "How are you, old fellow," he continued, leaping down and seizing the hand of his friend, who was really younger than himself, although "old fellow" was repeatedly uttered by them both.

"Whose carriage is that, Winkle?" asked Parke.

Mine—mine for a day or two, at the very least. But where are you going?"

"To the American, here. You know what that means. Out of money. Uncle Johnny at Princeton, you know, thinks differently. Have you seen any of the boys? Our class is off for the vacation. I don't go South this summer; but have written home for money. I have only a shilling left for cigars, and don't know how I am to get to the opera to-night, unless the landlord will lend me some cash. I'm glad the college is in good credit here."

"Say no more!" cried Walter. "Let me fling your carpet-bag in. Now jump up yourself. You shall be my guest. Aunty's away, and I am master of her establishment. Jupiter, Mars and Saturn! But I am glad I met you! What would I have done there alone, or with only a pack of grinning servants laughing at me, a noisy parrot, and a mischievous monkey? We'll enjoy ourselves, Parke, and you shall be at no expense. Drive home, Snapper! Parke, old fellow, there is a beautiful girl in the city——"

"A thousand, you mean."

"No, I don't. But there is one, above all others, the queen of beauty—the, *the* Oakland."

"Is she here?"

"At her uncle's—Dr. Nitre's. I brought her down to-day. After rubbing up a little we'll go there and have her to ride with us."

"Won't her aunt Nitre go along?"

"I hope not. But if she does, you know Virginia's *my* prize. That rich snob, Ralph Roland, is still following her—but she says he's not the thing. And I flatter myself——"

"But Winkle, you must let me have a fair start with you."

"Parke! It may be well for us to understand each other, and then there can be no mistake. Virginia and I are——"

"What?"

"Engaged! Now you have it. We expect to wait a year or so—but the thing is understood between ourselves. That's all. Don't whisper it in your dreams. Now, you may flirt with her as much as you please, and I can rely upon your honor."

"Oh, yes—I understand. The old trick."

"I assure you I am serious, George, though I cannot for the life of me look grave. If it were not so, what objection think you could I have to your falling in love with her, and she with you? None, whatever, believe me. But you forget Julia Nitre! If the old lady should take it into her head to be one of the party, I don't suppose her daughter is to be left at home."

"I've heard some accounts of Miss Julia; and if she be half as handsome as they report her, you may enjoy your real or pretended affianced to your heart's content. Is this your aunt's establishment? It is stately enough."

They descended in front of Miss Wilsome Winkle's mansion, and without delay mounted to the third story. The apartments had been hastily prepared for the accommodation of Walter, but nevertheless, there were many evidences remaining of the idiosyncrasy of the proprietor. Broken furniture, fractured china, and old slippers; the accumulation of some thirty years, were packed away under the beds and in the corners. Even dingy doll babies, probably arrived at the mature age of threescore and ten—for they had amused the little Wilsome some sixty years before—were visible in the closets. And on the mantel-piece, preserved in a glass case, was an antique silver pin-cushion, filled with pins blackened by the damps of departed generations, and duly labelled as the one used by Miss Winkle's mother, or grandmother, it is not recollected which, on her wedding-day. In another case, were the high-heeled wedding shoes. In short, Miss Wilsome was one of those remarkable characters who literally preserve every thing, and in emergencies can find nothing, because of the superabundance and confusion of their acquisitions. And although she was quite as parsimonious and economical as might be consistent with the habits of life, yet she never knew the exact state of her finances. Having originally one hundred thousand dollars, in money, the entire sum was invested in such securities as the cashier of the bank where the deposit

had been made, advised; and she never inquired further in relation to the safety of the investment, or in regard to the fluctuations of the stocks. The investment had been made when the stocks were fifty per cent. below par; and they had subsequently declined most alarmingly, without causing her a painful thought. But they were now fully at par; that is, worth donble the sum she had paid—and yet she did not seem to be aware of the gain. The dividends were passed to her credit in the bank, and she drew upon them without numbering her checks, or keeping any account of the balance subject to her order. She relied upon the annual publication of balances which the law required the banks to make, to ascertain in an indisputably authentic form, the exact statement of the amount of funds subject to her demand at stated periods. Such was her peculiar financial system; and the most acute banker would have failed in any attempt to convince her that her income might be materially increased by the adoption of any other.

"See here, Winkle!" said Parke, "are we not in the wrong chamber? This looks like a nursery, or a museum."

"It looks like aunt Wilsome's mind precisely—but I will see if any other room on this floor is in a better condition. No!" he continued, endeavoring to open other doors. "All locked. Just like her. She won't trust us in any other chamber than the one allotted to us. Some of them they say have not been entered for years by any one but herself. She creeps about alone with a candle in her hand at all hours of the night. So say the servants, who have watched her. But if you are ready, let us be off."

"How does that look?" demanded Parke, adjusting his cravat before a large old ebony-framed glass.

"Quite right. Come."

"How much money have you, Winkle? You know I told you I had none."

"Let me see what's in the purse my aunt threw me. First—a penny."

"By Jove, a penny! Where are the opera tickets and the cigars to come from?"

"Stop! Here's a quarter—and a number of three cent pieces. Ha! next come the quarter eagles—one, two, three, four, five, six! That's all."

"That will do."

"Jupiter! What's this in the other end? A check—a check for one hundred dollars!"

"Good!"

"It is good. Payable to bearer. Drawn a week ago—look at the date. She's forgotten all about it?"

"Will you draw the money?"

"If we need it. But come. We must give the girls an airing. There's old Snapper gazing up for us, and the horses are snorting impatiently."

The young bloods descended to the street, and were soon sitting in the coach in the attitude of unfeigned satisfaction.

A few minutes afterwards the young gentlemen were entering Mrs. Nitre's parlor. They found themselves rather abruptly in the presence of the young ladies, and were joined a moment after by Mrs. Nitre and the merry-faced doctor.

"We came to propose——" said Walter, stammering and hesitating, after the ceremony of introducing his friend, and laboring under some degree of embarrassment, notwithstanding his predetermined impudence, or boldness; and as all eyes were now turned upon him, and a silence prevailed, he found it impossible to proceed.

"The deuce you do!" at length exclaimed the doctor, rising comically. "If that be the case, Mrs. Nitre, should not you and I withdraw?"

"Don't attempt to be witty, doctor," replied his wife; "no one is amused at you; all can see that you merely affect to be serious."

"We came to propose," continued Walter, blushing in unison with the girls, "to the ladies——" and again he paused.

"Of course, to the ladies," said the doctor, "who else could it be to?"

"To Mrs. Nitre, and—" pursued Walter, forgetting his previous resolution of omitting her name, but aware there would not be room for five in the carriage.

"Oho!" cried the doctor, "then it must be a proposal of some other nature."

"If such a thing were possible, the doctor would not object to see me proposed for and taken away," said Mrs. Nitre, who was one of the few dames who habitually depreciate their husbands in the presence of their guests, without being aware

that husband and wife are a unit, and that they must necessarily degrade themselves by such practices.

"I mean that we came to propose a drive in my aunt's carriage, which is waiting at the door," said Walter, now quite recovered.

"And to slight me—deliberately to cut me," said the doctor, apparently not heeding Mrs. N.'s allusion. "But my own carriage will be at the door in a few minutes. I have to call at the Girard to see some friends—the Gaffs of New York—and Mrs. Nitre has agreed to accompany me."

"I believe I won't go," said Mrs. Nitre. "The Gaffs are not intimate acquaintances of mine. They made a fortune selling drugs by the dose, soda-water by the glass, tooth-brushes, cologne, etc."

This speech was made to young Parke, whose family was known to be of the aristocratic order.

"Then I need not delay. I will excuse you on the plea of company," said Dr. Nitre, rather gravely; "but I hope, my dear, that I may invite them to tea to-morrow, and that you will call on them this evening." And he departed without further delay.

"No doubt the vacation is a carnival," said Miss Oakland, who had engaged in a free conversation with young Parke, and was exerting her powers of fascination, for she was piqued at Walter for having, it might be unconsciously, surrendered a beautiful rose to Julia.

"It is indeed. And we endeavor to seize the opportunity to reap its enjoyments. Fortune has favored me to-day. I came alone to the city, and in a melancholy humor, for I was out of money, as well as out of spirits, and almost out at the elbows, to await a letter from home, when Winkle espied me. What a change! I am now the happiest of men!"

"Men!" cried Mrs. Nitre, placing her hand on the youth's arm, "you must first get into the senior class, my dear boy."

"But the sun is sinking," said Walter, "and the carriage waits."

"There is room for only four in the carriage," said Julia, looking out of the window.

"That's awkward," said Mrs. Nitre. "I cannot trust the girls alone with such madcaps. Remain to tea, and send home the carriage."

"Will you let them go with us to the opera, if we do?" asked Walter.

"Not to-night."

"Why not, mamma?" asked Julia.

"I don't go to such places often. Our rector does not approve of it. But it is probable the Gaffs may be there, and then my husband might be suspected of uttering or conniving at a falsehood." Mrs. Nitre, although she habitually strove to mortify the doctor when in his presence, was remarkably kind to him behind his back.

"Then you will stay?" asked Julia.

"I sup——" began Walter.

"You recollect our *positive* engagement?" said George, quickly.

"Hem—yes! I came near forgetting it. I'm very sorry; but we cannot break the engagement," replied Walter, wondering what sort of a story George would invent.

"So you are engaged for other company, Mr. Parke?" asked Virginia.

"Yes," said George, without hesitation. "Several fellows from Princeton are to meet us there. But if we can find them before the doors open, perhaps we might persuade them to come here."

"Do so," said Mrs. Nitre. "The girls will expect you."

The young gentlemen departed, promising if possible to return in the evening.

"What fellows from Princeton did you mean, George?" asked Walter, as the carriage proceeded slowly towards the theatre, the horses being now quite jaded, and altogether tame enough.

"Ourselves, of course. I thought we were to have a lark to-night."

"Good! And I was not well pleased with Virginia's conduct. She had nothing to say to me."

"Oh, you had no rose for her."

"Julia snatched it. Ha! ha! That was the reason. Here we are. Drive home, Snapper, and you need not return for us. Tell cook to have a glorious supper in readiness—and take a bottle or so into the kitchen for yourselves."

The young gentlemen soon grew weary of the opera. There was not a fashionable audience present; and although they might be able to translate Italian, they could not interpret it

as it was uttered in song on the stage, and hence they did not find themselves so pleasantly entertained as they had anticipated. At the end of the first act they abandoned the place.

"Back to Nitre's?" asked George.

"No," said Walter; "we're on a lark."

"Where shall we go?"

"Let me think."

"To Abraham Laban's! What say you?"

"The Jew pawnbroker's?"

"Yes."

"Why? I have plenty of money."

"Why? For the fun of the thing. Great Nose knows me."

"No doubt of it."

"And perhaps he'll permit us to have a glance at his customers. He's fond of fun himself when he don't lose by it. And he's rich, too. They say he is owner of fine houses—has ships at the wharf—gold in the mines—manufactures false dice—contracts with the government—sues the insurance companies—is a politician—distils brandy from rye, and lends money under three balls. At certain hours he may be found at his different places of business, and I have reason to know this is his night for the three balls. Let us see how much we can raise on my watch."

"No. Let me try my diamond pin. I can redeem it to-morrow. The less he advances, the less will be the cost of the fun."

"Agreed. But let us appear to be in a d—l of a fix—most distressingly in need of money. That will sharpen his cupidity, as my books say, and cause the interest to be less, as the advance will certainly be small. What is the pin worth?"

"It cost my father, I have heard my mother say, just fifty dollars."

"We'll see what he says of it. After business, if he drives a good bargain, he may be pleasant. Come on—it is near at hand, in the next back street."

"You know the way?"

"Yes. He once sold a flute of mine among his forfeited collaterals, and a friend bought it at a less sum than Great Nose had advanced me. But he has recovered the loss since."

They had now arrived at the place of entrance under the

balls glittering in the moonlight. Young Parke knew the signal and soon obtained admittance.

"Ah! Is it you? I'm glad to see you, Mr. Parke, and your friend. Come back into my private office," said Abraham, who was an American Israelite, leading the young gentlemen into a small, well lighted apartment, which he usually occupied himself, and whence he disputed with his customers through a square opening communicating with a stall in the front room.

"Any customers in front?" asked Parke, after introducing Winkle as his friend, without naming him.

"Not now. There may be, soon. Many of the fashionables are making arrangements to spend a few weeks at the watering-places. I have had two curious applicants to-night whom you should have seen or heard. It would have been a lesson for you."

"Tell us about them, Abraham."

"Perhaps I will, after business. What have you brought me this time? Not the old flute, I hope. That was a smart trick. I won't advance so much next time. I was too liberal. What do you want now?"

"Nothing myself. I'm rich since I made that fortune out of you. My friend here wants your assistance."

"I hope I shall have the pleasure of serving him. I will advance him any amount on his simple bond."

"That is liberal," said George; "you never made me any such generous offer."

"Your parents live too far away. Besides, I did not know you had any rich bachelor uncles and maiden aunts."

"Do you suppose I have any?" asked Walter.

"Ha, ha, ha! You know *me*—every body knows the Jew, Abraham Laban; and why should not Abraham know every body? Tell me that, Mr. Walter Winkle."

"I see no reason why he should not. You certainly know me. Well, I am in great distress for a little ready cash; and I fear to forfeit the good opinion of my rich relatives by applying to them just at this particular time. Besides, my necessity is most urgent, and will not admit of delay. It is to compound a little scandalous affair on my hands, which would ruin me if made known."

"Aha! Pretty scrapes you pretty young gentlemen run your necks into. But you must pay for them."

"I am willing to pay. I have this diamond pin, worth, you know, two hundred dollars——"

"Two hundred cents!" said the Jew. "That would be nearer the mark."

"Oh, I want only fifty dollars——"

"Fifty dollars! Why Mr. Parke, some one worse than any Jew has been skinning your friend, if he paid any such price as he says this thing is worth."

"What do *you* say it is worth?" demanded Walter.

"Pooh! some twenty dollars, I suppose, if some dandy had his heart fixed on it. Fifteen is as much as I can venture."

"Two hundred down to fifteen!" said Walter. "What a fall! Well, my countryman, have your own way. Launch forth the monish!"

"Here! But, young man, I have my doubts about the truth of your tale. I am too much accustomed to the symptoms and aspects of real distress to be easily deceived. Yet I confess I do not understand your motive."

"Is it necessary you should?" asked Walter.

"No—not in matters of business; but merely for my own satisfaction. Every one knows my motive."

"Yes. The balls declare it."

"And somehow I find out the secrets of my customers, if they don't choose to reveal them themselves. I should not be surprised if you came here purely for amusement. Confess—and you shall be entertained."

"Here's your money. My pin! But to convince you of my candor now, see this check. Cash it for me on your own terms."

"Good. Here are ten eagles, that I borrowed from the banker this morning—or rather received them at the solicitation of one of the officers, the stockholders being willing to share the gains above the usual interest."

"Now tell us about the customers."

"Listen, and remember. The first was a clergyman. A Christian seeking aid from a Jew!"

"But not a Dives, petitioning father Abraham," said Walter.

"No. And yet he has had his good things in this world. He came enveloped in a cloak—warm as the weather is—which I soon caused him to throw aside. I do not like

disguises—from myself. He confessed all. He has enjoyed the reputation of being the possessor of wealth in Louisiana, —has preached in the fine churches—and finally captivated the heart of a young widow of two months' standing——"

"Two months' standing?"

"The grass has not yet grown over the grave of her deceased husband. She, too, is regarded as a fortune. Well, the lover desired a sum to keep up appearances ten months more, until the expiration of the decent term of mourning. He offered me fifty per cent——"

"And you agreed to it, of course," said Parke.

"I did no such thing!"

"And after hearing his distressful tale?" asked Walter.

"You shall know all, and then decide. No offer he could make would avail, and so I dismissed him. The next visitor was a beautiful young lady, in deep mourning——"

"In mourning!" cried both the young gentlemen.

"In deep mourning—for she was the widow——"

"The widow!"

"Yes, the widow; and she was very properly in mourning. But the veil was lifted for me. She confessed what I already knew very well, that her late husband died insolvent. And then she spoke of the great fortune of her wooer—the clergyman—and said if she could only borrow from me the means of meeting the demands of creditors until the celebration of her nuptials, she would then be enabled to pay me munificently."

"Is this romance or reality?" asked Walter, gravely.

"It is truth. I know the widow could not be deprived of her dower. Her husband possessed much real estate, although he died insolvent. I told her she would have sufficient fortune for a comfortable support, and advised her not to seek to avoid an exposure of her husband's affairs. I then told her all I knew of her lover, the nature of his application to me, and of his design upon her supposed large fortune."

"What did she say to that?" asked Parke.

"Not what you would suppose. Her heart had not been engaged in the matter at all. As a clear-headed, cool, calculating woman of the world, she merely laughed at his impudence and hypocrisy; lamented her own want of discernment; and then calmly renounced him for ever. No doubt she will ensnare a rich beau before the end of the year, and

then she will remember the Jew. Be silent! I hear the tinkle of another visitor."

This visitor, when admitted by the girl who answered the bell, did not proceed at once to the stall of communication; but strode backwards and forwards under the small lamp that dimly illuminated the dreary room. And as he promenaded words were uttered in his soliloquy, not comprehended by the Jew.

"He's talking Latin!" said Walter, in a low tone.

"Greek too!" responded Parke.

"Greek and Latin! Who can it be? Let's have a peep at him."

They beheld a thin man of medium height, with a black frock coat buttoned up to the chin. His face was very pale, and classically handsome. His forehead, especially, was a noble one, fair, round, and expansive. His age might be five and thirty. At length he approached the pawnbroker's cell.

"I want money," said he. "My name is Pollen. Perhaps you have heard it."

"Yes, I have heard it—and so has every body, I suppose."

"Is it good?"

"Good? Yes, a very good one, as a poet. And it will be famous; for the British reviewers say you are a man of genius."

"If it be good, then, how much is it good for?"

"How much money? That's a different matter. I deal in dollars and cents, and tangible valuables. The commodities of fame and genius, and all such fanciful things, may be esteemed by those who traffic in such articles, but I am not one of them. I want that which I can see, feel, taste, barter, exchange, for my money."

"Would you not like to have your name mentioned in the biography of a man of genius, as a generous benefactor?"

"No! What good would it do me when dead?"

"If you did not survive to enjoy it, would it not be a credit to your despised tribe?"

"No. Rather a curse. Men of genius, lacking common sense, improvident and poor, would be always wearying them with their importunities, as you are now wearying me."

"Have you no feeling for men of genius in distress? I am in distress; and you say I have genius."

"I attend to my business. This is my place of business. I pursue my business to amass riches. You come to me and speak of *genius*, of *feeling*, and such nonsense. If I can make money by dealing with you, well; if not, leave me."

"Enough. You can, perhaps, make money by the operation. Here is a short poem—one of my best. I have been paid fifty dollars for one not better nor longer. Take it, and give me forty dollars."

"No."

"Thirty."

"No."

"Twenty."

"No."

"Ten."

"No."

"One dollar!"

"Let me see it."

"Here it is."

"Read it, young gentleman," whispered the Jew, placing the sheet in Parke's hand, "and let me have your opinion. If it is good, I know an editor who will buy it."

"I sell my name with it," said the poet—"for I must eat—and that you know is not unknown."

"Good!" cried George.

"Glorious!" cried Walter.

"Who says so? You have company, then? Bribe them to be silent, or this interview may be bruited over the world. But they are critics. I shall raise the price, Shylock. Beware! Five dollars is the very least I will take for my poem."

"If the publishers have paid as high as fifty dollars, why did you not apply to them?"

"I did. I came from one of them directly to you. Happy thought!"

"Was it approved?"

"Yes. But unfortunately I was something in arrears for former advances, and desired to obtain the cash for this poem. But they wanted it in fulfilment of an engagement. I promised others, but insisted on having the price of the present production, to answer my immediate necessities. They would not believe me, which is a provocative of delinquency. But I will fulfil all my engagements. Do you buy

it, and I will dedicate it to you for a certain consideration, received in advance——"

"Aha! Now you are the man of business. See now, if I was not right awhile ago."

"Very right. What shall the dedication be worth? I must know beforehand. A friend once dedicated to a rich man, and did not receive, in return, so much as an acknowledgment of the compliment. Business men must be dealt with in a business-like manner. Men of great hearts in a noble manner. Asses in an asinine manner."

"How will you classify me?"

"As you may deserve."

"I will give you five dollars for the poem."

"Good! I shall eat again, and then sleep."

"The dedication?"

"D—— the dedication. Your name shall not be associated with mine."

"Not on the same bond, truly. But mine would bring the most money."

"The most filth—dust, dust, dust—what is money, but so much of the dross of the earth, whilst my coinage is indestructible!"

"I will not give you five dollars for the poem."

"Then pass it back."

"I'll give you ten!" cried Walter.

"Are you there, young Truepenny? Come forth. You shall have it, and share a jovial bottle with me besides. Come forth."

The young gentlemen joined him immediately, notwithstanding the attempts of the Jew to the contrary, and the three sallied forth together. The name of the poet, Harold Pollen, was familiar to the young men, and that of Winkle was not unknown to the poet, for he had once been an invited guest at Miss Wilsome's mansion, and had played whist with her. A few moments sufficed for introduction, and then it was agreed they should immediately proceed together to the "Winkle Mansion," as it was called.

CHAPTER IV.

NINE AT SUPPER—STAR-GAZING—NOCTURNAL MISTAKES—SHOOTING STARS.

When the young gentlemen entered the "Winkle Mansion," they found a sumptuous repast awaiting them; and as the poet had fasted long, and intimated that he was annoyed by an intolerable thirst, not many words were spoken until several courses had vanished, and after the decapitation of the second bottle.

"Winkle," at length said the poet, "you know of course who it is you are entertaining in this princely manner."

"Certainly—the author of 'The Treasure,' 'The Steed of the Clouds," and 'The Rook,'—a poet, who——"

"A vagabond!"

"A genius!" said Parke.

"A vagabond," repeated Pollen.

"You seem to be minus the usual quantum of linen about the neck," said Walter, scrutinising his guest. "Why is your coat buttoned up to your chin in such suffocatingly hot weather?"

"Because I have neither vest nor shirt under it."

"Is it possible?" cried the young men together, really shocked at such an announcement.

"I could give you further demonstration by unbuttoning my coat. I suppose you have some linen in the house, and will clothe the poet whom you have so sumptuously feasted."

Walter immediately conducted his guest to the chamber above, where he was speedily arrayed in a snowy nether garment, and accommodated with a seasonable vest.

"I did not say I was a vagabond," continued Pollen, on resuming his seat at the round table in the dining-room, "because of the deficiency in my wardrobe, and for the pitiful purpose of obtaining the loan of a shirt; but because I write tales and verses, and am poor—because I forfeited an estate by refusing to flatter a woman I disliked—because I won't cheat and steal——"

"That's a strange reason," interrupted Parke.

"It is a strange world. Let me whisper a secret in your

ear—and mind, you are not to betray your author. Will you both promise, upon your honor, not to betray me?"

"Both. Upon honor."

"Then listen!" said the poet, in a hoarse whisper, while his face assumed a paler hue than usual: "All very rich men, who have made their own fortunes, are rogues and rascals."

"I have heard that before," said Walter; "but I cannot believe it."

"No doubt some of my friends have whispered it about the world," said Pollen. "It is true, though, and you may believe it. But I have another secret, which I am sure you have never heard. The vagabond is quite as happy as the rich man. The proof? I am the vagabond, and the hunch-nosed Jew is the rich man. Well, suppose Abraham sleeps some eight hours in the twenty-four. His dreams are filled with conflagrations, bankruptcies, robberies; visions of the broken-hearted widows and orphans he has despoiled; arrests for crimes long forgotten by all but himself; prisons and compulsory restitutions. Then we may estimate some four hours of the day devoted to fearful anticipations, to threats of enemies, reproaches of his victims, and dread of detection. Thus half of his life is miserable."

"Now, yours?" said Walter.

"My dreams—when sober—are blissful. I am the possessor of illimitable wealth, without a pang of remorse, for no one has been victimized in the process of its acquisition. With boundless generosity, I enjoy the luxury of bestowing benefits on the deserving and needy. The oppressor scowls, the usurer gnashes his teeth at me; but the good and the humble bless my name. What felicity! I mount into an empyreal atmosphere—become dephlogisticated——"

"And metaphysical," said Walter. "But we are in this mundane region now, Pollen, with tangible objects before us."

"Very true, and I will descend to them. But you must admit I have demonstrated that without a dime in my pocket—I lie, I have an eagle—I may enjoy more hours of happiness than the rich Abraham."

"When you are quite sober," said Parke, sipping his wine, "and in your dreams."

"Keep sober!" cried a voice, from the portico in the yard.

"Who said that?" cried Parke, stepping to the open window and looking out among the vines, where all was silent now, and lonely in the moonlight.

"A mere echo," said the poet, when the young man resumed his seat.

"It sounded very much like my aunt's voice," said Walter. "If she were to come upon us, we should be given into the custody of the watchman."

"Trumps! Down with your trumps!" said the voice.

"My aunt! Let us escape!" said Walter, leaping up.

"Sit still. Be calm," said the poet. "It is not her voice. I believe in the existence of ghosts."

"Feathered ones," said Parke, standing again at the open window.

"The parrot!" exclaimed Walter, resuming his seat.

"An imitator. He merely echoes the sounds he hears. Hence the resemblance of your aunt's voice. They call *me* an imitator of Coleridge and others, but——"

"No metaphysics," said Parke.

"The d——l," exclaimed Pollen, rising abruptly.

"What's the matter, now?" demanded Walter.

"I'm bitten. A mad dog! See—my finger is bleeding."

"I hear the rattling of a chain under the table," said Parke. "I thought I saw something glide in from yonder door as I returned from the window."

"Sit still!" said Walter. "Move not a muscle; a mosquito could not have produced such a wound."

"Nor a cobra di capello," said Pollen.

"It is biting my toe!" said Parker, turning pale, and kicking the assailing object violently with his heel.

They sprang up in great alarm, and discovered, in amazement, Miss Wilsome's great monkey in the last convulsive struggles of death. Parke had broken its neck.

"Monkeys and parrots!" said Pollen; "abominations to man—fit companions for old maids."

"My aunt will lament over Jocko as she would over a brother. Mr. Roland accidentally killed her cat, and she has never forgiven him. How shall I avoid her anger? She'll disinherit me."

"Leave it to me," said Pollen, dragging forth the dead animal by its chain, which was of silver. "I hope all the servants are asleep."

"Are you asleep, Biddy?" asked Walter, turning towards the door leading into the kitchen.

"Iss, sir," was the prompt response of the watching girl.

"I understand her," said Walter, seeing the astonishment of his companions. "She means that we need not fear her."

"Then lead the way to the roof of the portico," said the poet, "and get me a nail and hammer. I will suspend him from the eaves, and it will be a case of accidental strangulation."

"Good!" cried Walter; "or, what is infinitely better, a case of suicide—despair on being abandoned by his beloved mistress. Excellent!"

"I could tell you some singular freaks of monkeys," said Pollen; "but let us first hang up this gentleman."

The work was soon accomplished, but not without danger to the young gentlemen, for their vision was becoming confused, and their steps unsteady under the influence of their excessive libations.

The three jovial comrades then sallied forth into the street, their arms interlocked, and humming snatches from the opera in the moonlight.

"Be cautious, young gentlemen!" said a watchman, meeting them.

"Why?" asked Pollen.

"Are you a pick-pocket?" asked Parke.

"I shall keep my eye on you," replied the watchman.

"And if you do," said Walter, "you will not see straight again during the remainder of your life, for I believe there is an obliquity in our course."

"Yes," said Parke; "and every five minutes brings us against a wall, or over the curb."

"My thoughts are mounting upward," said Pollen—"earth vanishes from my vision. I see meteors and coruscations. They are the flashy novelists and poets forced into being by partial critics. They fill the atmosphere—they go out like rockets—but the blue vault above is gemmed by illuminating stars that will remain for ever. The vagabond Pollen—sneered at by splay-footed English compilers, frowned upon by Scotch librarians, slighted by publishers, slandered by his rivals—will take his place among them, and cast his rays upon the world!"

"What is that, poetry or prophecy?" asked Parke.

"Irreverent interlocutor! It is true, lamentably, a prophet is without honor in his own country. I will reap the honors bestowed in other countries."

"But will you live to enjoy them?" asked Walter.

"No, I suppose not; therefore I enjoy them now—in anticipation. Ha! ha! ha! I wonder if Abraham has any such enjoyment?"

"Halt! Steady!" said Parker, as the three companions were confronted by several gaudily-dressed persons who ran against them.

"Who are you?" demanded Pollen.

"Fairies," said one of them. "We heard you talking of the sky and the stars."

"Night hawks, you mean. Avaunt! I say!" continued Pollen, endeavoring to thrust away one that clung to him. "Begone to your dripping caves; we are not the prey you seek. The shirt I wear is borrowed——"

"But your breath smells of good wine."

"Do you covet it? Off, I say! My sword! Oh, that I had one! Boys, she has torn my bosom."

"What now?" demanded the watchman, appearing before them. "I said I'd keep an eye on you!"

"You neglect your duty, sir!" said Walter. "While you are watching us, who are gentlemen and peaceable, you permit us to be beset by these——"

"What?" demanded one of the strangers.

"Street harpies."

"That will not do," was replied.

Pollen turned aside with his companions, leaving the guardian of the night engaged in amicable converse with the harpies. The poet had a well-founded dread of the watchman's rattle, for he had been more than once an involuntary lodger at the depot of nocturnal offenders.

And Walter and Parke, not relishing the idea of an adventure with the police, to which they were conscious of being liable, from the excited condition of their intellects, agreed to return to the mansion, and finish the night under a friendly shelter, and where they could not be subjected to any unpleasant interruptions.

By means of a night-key, which Walter had taken the precaution to furnish himself with, the door was opened and

they entered in triumph. But an unforeseen disappointment awaited them.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed they upon closing the door, and finding themselves in impenetrable darkness.

"Biddy! Where are you? Why did you put out the lights?" cried Walter, groping his way through the hall. "Softly, gentlemen," said he; "let us get back into the dining-room. Hold each other's skirts, and proceed in Indian file."

"Out here, too," said Parker, when they reached the dining-room. "Who has matches?"

"Not I," said Walter, "nor do I know where to find them. Let us go up stairs and rouse Biddy. How dark!" he continued, as they ascended the stairs, feeling their way.

"Not a star blinks upon us," said Pollen.

"Nor a meteor's ineffectual fire," said Parker.

After ascending several flights of stairs, the party paused and felt for the chamber doors, and not knowing which might be occupied by the housemaid.

"I doubt if Biddy is here," said Walter, in a whisper. "My aunt, I suspect, makes her sleep in the attic."

"Where poverty-stricken poets repose," said Pollen.

"But the door opens," said Walter. "If we find beds let us lie down till morning lights the orient, and not trouble the servants."

"Agreed!" was the response of the others.

In a short time two beds were found; but before our adventurers had begun to undress themselves, their ears were saluted by frightful cries and screams.

"Who can they be?" said Walter. "Three different voices, and all females. Biddy!"

"Emily!"

"Clara!"

"Oh, Mary—sister! Thieves! Robbers!"

"Murder!"

Such were the cries proceeding in quick succession from the beds.

"Hold fast to my coat-tail, George," whispered Walter, leading the way out into the passage. "We are in the wrong mansion! My aunt's night-key fits her neighbor's door! Let us get out again as quickly as possible, or the whole neigh-

borhood will be alarmed. What a scrape! and the first night, too!"

"There it is!" said Pollen, trembling violently, upon hearing a window thrown up, and vociferous cries for the police. And the next moment several rattles were sprung, and hoarse voices and the trampling of heavy feet could be distinguished in the street.

"What's this?" asked Walter, pausing in his retreat, and finding his hand resting upon a round, smooth surface. "It is warm! A man's bald head, by Jupiter!"

"Have mercy upon me and my poor daughters," said the crouching father of the alarmed family. Walter recognized the voice of a distinguished professor, the occupant of the house; and without replying he passed on, followed by his companions, clinging to each other. They proceeded beyond the turning which would have conducted them down stairs, and wandered into the rear building, where they confronted the old housekeeper in her chemise. She fell speechless and fainting, and they stumbled over her, falling in a heap beyond. But there was no time for idle delay. The police had burst open the front door, and one or two shots from revolvers had already been fired at random in the darkness.

"Here's a room open!" said Walter, with his hand on the latch of a door at the extreme end of the long back building.

"In there!" said the poet. "They have a light, and are pursuing us!" They entered, and found the apartment uncarpeted, and could distinguish objects in it, for the moon shone through the window.

"A store room, filled with barrels!" said Walter.

"And here are empty ones on this side," said Parker.

"Let us hide ourselves in them—quick!" said Pollen. They did so, and ceased to speak for many minutes, while the police searched in other places for the burglars.

"We have escaped, I think," whispered Walter.

"How the deuce are we to get out?" asked Parker. "Walter, old fellow, you've got me into a d—l of a scrape."

"It is an adventure. Consider the fun! Won't we laugh! But my aunt must never hear of it. I can venture to tell Virginia."

"Hist! I hear them yet!" said Pollen. "If we are found the whole world will know it, for the press will speak with a million tongues."

"If they catch us, Walter," said Parke, "we must not let them know who we are. I'll be John Smith, and you John Jones."

"But *I* am known," said the poet, "and shall be recognized."

"True," said Walter. "That is the misery of being distinguished. We will stand by each other, and share the same fate. Besides, we can easily escape by explaining frankly the mistake. Perhaps they will suppress our names. The adventure itself, however, must be related, and the whole town be set to guessing. Be quiet. I hear some one coming this way. Hush! you'll betray us by such sneezing."

"Curse the flour! I can't help it!" said Pollen, who, with Parke, kept up an incessant sneezing, the sounds of which they vainly strove to suppress.

"Listen!" said a voice in the passage. "Here they are!" The next moment the door was thrown open, and a flood of light poured in. Three or four policemen entered, each holding a revolver in the left hand and a mace in the other. They were followed by the fat professor, holding in his hands, which trembled very much, a large blunderbuss. The rear was brought up by several servants armed with pokers and carving-knives; while at a distance behind, might have been dimly seen the old housekeeper, brandishing a long-handled broom.

"I—I don't see them here," said the professor, after glancing his eyes fearfully round the room, and breaking the silence that had ensued after the party had entered. "But they are somewhere on the premises, and one of them put his hand on my head." His head was now covered with a silken cap.

Pollen sneezed again just as he ceased speaking.

"What was that? Bless my life!" exclaimed the professor, nimbly springing away from the poet's barrel in the vicinity of which he chanced to be standing.

"They are in the barrels," said the leading policeman in a loud voice, "and if they do not surrender, we'll send a shower of balls through the staves."

"We'll surrender, of course," said Pollen; "we are without arms."

"We'll not take your word for that," said the officer. "Rise and show yourselves."

All three stood up.

"Mercy on us! Oh Lud!" cried the cook and coachman, starting back, and rushing away over the prostrate form of their master, who nevertheless rolled and scrambled out of the room.

Their affright was natural enough, for our young adventurers who had entered the barrels in black, now appeared in white. Even their faces and hands were thickly covered with flour.

"It was only a mistake," said Walter. "We came hither with no evil intent, but merely entered the wrong house by mistake. We thought we were in the adjoining building, and were about to retire, as we supposed, to our beds——"

"Here are their hats," said Mary, the oldest of the professor's daughters, now venturing to join the policemen.

"That story won't do," said the policeman, bowing to the young lady. "Are there any more of you in the other barrels?" he continued, addressing the supposed robbers.

"No," said Pollen. "But my friend's story is true, as you will ascertain."

"We'll see. No more words. I don't want to hear a syllable. You are our prisoners. Seize them, men!" They were seized and conducted out. But as they passed through the hall, Mary with seeming pity gave them their hats, while the other sisters standing aloof, gazed at them without symptoms of alarm.

Unwilling to hear any thing their captives might have to say in justification of their conduct, although it was easily perceptible from their manners and speeches that they were not common burglars, the policemen hurried them away to prison, and locked them up in a room where there were many offenders who had been taken that night.

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!"

was the exclamation of an actor, confined with the rest, upon seeing our adventurers advance after the heavy door had been locked upon them.

"We have not committed any crime," said Parke, glancing round at the staring company of men and women; some seated upon benches, and others lying on the straw. "We were merely on a lark, after enjoying our champagne. We are gentlemen."

"Not gentlemen ob color!" said a corpulent Negro.

This was followed by a boisterous explosion of laughter at the expense of the young men, whose whitened exterior alone was sufficiently provocative.

"I'm on the bench," said the actor (which was literally true), "and will hear your cause."

"Agreed!" cried many of the company, crowding round. "Let us hear what they have to say for themselves."

"'Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,'" said Pollen, standing forth, and lifting his hand, "I will, with your permission, relate the manner of our coming hither."

"No!—Yes!—It is!" cried the actor, rushing forward and embracing the poet, whom he had recognized, notwithstanding his mask of flour.

"Mum!" whispered Pollen; "don't betray me to this vile herd." The poet had written a play in which the actor had represented one of the characters.

"Proceed," said the judge, resuming his seat, amid last shouts of laughter at his ludicrous appearance, having robbed the poet of half his flour.

Then Pollen, concealing names and localities, succinctly narrated the adventures of his companions and himself. At the conclusion, the company pronounced a unanimous acquittal, which was ratified by the judge.

"And now, Mr. Glass," said Pollen, addressing the actor, "pray tell us what brought you here."

"Intoxication, and grief, and damning a watchman who stared at me impertinently. You smile at the word grief, but I am serious, as these tears—a man's tears—may attest. My Dilly—I mean my daughter, my only child—was entrapped, and taken away from me last week. Every body knows how glorious was her debut, and that she has ever since been greeted by rapturous applause at every subsequent appearance. She was rising, I declining. But just when I had reason to believe her capable of relieving me of a portion of my burden of toil and care, the tempter came! A rich man——"

"A d - - rascal!"

"Most assuredly he was, my friend," continued the actor. "He said he wished to rescue her from the dangers of the profession. By costly presents, and seemingly parental affection—for he was twice her age—he induced her to desert the stage, upon which her father had won distinction, and to promise him to abandon it for ever. Many propositions he

made her; but the only one she listened to was that she should, under an assumed name, take up her residence in some respectable boarding-house in New York, until her education was completed. She left me more than a week ago. A letter in her chamber was filled with pledges of filial affection, and resolutions to preserve her honor. I find that my salary has been increased through some mysterious agency; but my happiness is all gone. I drag heavily through my part every night, and then seek to drown my woe in deep libations. I lodge here, where alone I find honest sympathy."

"It is a rascally world, Mr. Glass—this company excepted," said Pollen. "Oh, that I could find a true American! The plays, the operas, the ballets, are usurped by foreigners! Foreign literature alone is lauded—the critics are foreigners, and monarchical and aristocratic modes of thought, feeling and action, are fermented through every pore of the Republic. We get our manners from the British, our costumes from the French, our wines from the Germans, our voters from Ireland and our religion from Rome! Our librarians are Scotchmen. They not only exclude my books from their shelves, but laugh in my face whenever I look over their catalogues!"

"No doubt my evil tormentor Ralph is of foreign extraction," said Glass.

"Ralph? Did you say Ralph?" asked Walter, roused from an apparent lethargy he had fallen into. Parke was snoring on a bench.

"Yes—Ralph Roland!"

"I know him I would advise you to get your daughter away as soon as possible."

"I need not be advised! I want only the means of doing so. Thank heaven, I have cause to be confident of the impregnability of my daughter's virtue against a million roués and rakes in arms! That alone sustains me."

Towards morning all the inmates became silent. Some of them brooded over their troubles, while others slept. In the morning, a confidential note written by Walter to Professor Pont, caused a speedy liberation of the three jovial companions. Pollen then interested himself in the actor's behalf, and easily succeeded with his honor the mayor, whose sympathy with the sons of genius or of Momus, was never appealed to in vain.

CHAPTER V.

SECRET PLOTTINGS—THE FROG HUNTER—MUSHROOMS AND PATTYPANS.

We have seen that the appearance of Bill Dizzle, the frog hunter, at Mrs. Winkle's, with the beautiful tom-cat, put an immediate end to the game of whist. Miss Griselda Gusset departed immediately after, and was met a few steps from Mrs. Winkle's door by Ralph Roland, who drew her arm through his and led her into the obscurity under a large sycamore-tree that stood on the opposite side of the street.

"Well, Gusset," said Roland, in a low voice, pausing under the great tree, "is my peace truly made with the infernal old maid? Bill Dizzle says so, but he don't know always what he says."

"It is, indeed. But why have you taken such pains to please her? You don't wish to marry her."

"Marry *her!* No—but you know Lucy is the most charming creature in the world, and as the family in Babbleton are likely to become dependent on the old maid, it will follow that Miss Wilsome's caprices shall be respected by her niece."

"But, really, are you in love with Lucy?"

"Desperately!"

"And Virginia?"

"Quite as deeply!"

"You are a Turk! But you can't marry them both."

"Leave that to me. I believe Virginia Oakdale is in love with Walter, and Lucy with this mysterious Lowe—a fellow low enough, I doubt not, polished as he is in manners. Now, my happiness depends upon the utter frustration of the hopes and calculations of them all—and you must aid me, as I am aiding you."

"What have you done for me?"

"I rode to the Emperor's to-night just after his startling cannonading. He was in one of his finest humors; and when he asked if all the good people of Babbleton were not abusing him, I told him you were delighted with his military celebrations, and only regretted you were not a man to join him, and

share the pleasure of fighting all of Bonaparte's battles over again."

"What did he say to that?"

"Gad, he said you were the only national woman he knew, and that if he were ten years younger he would marry you."

"He did? Did he say that to you?"

"Certainly—and he'll say the same thing the next time he meets you, if his sister or sister-in-law be not present to intimidate him. It is singular that one so indomitable and self-willed in the field, should be so pusillanimous and impressible in the house, when plied by the women."

"But what did *you* say, when he made that remark?"

"Oh, I told him that he was quite young enough; that no doubt you would accept such an offer, and if you did, he would possess a meek and sympathizing coadjutor in his wife."

"I thank you, Mr. Roland—and I will assist you in all your innocent love schemes to the utmost of my poor ability."

"One good turn deserves another, you know; and I rely upon your superior understanding to find out something about this Mr. Lowe, which may be of service to me. Oh, I forgot! The great Napoleon, learning that his sister has arrived, is to make amends for some old affront, by inviting a party to play whist at his house. I have arranged it so that you shall be there, to make up the game. I detest it myself, and the old gentleman cannot be relied upon. So I fear this infernal Lowe will also be required."

"Miss Wilsome will have him for her partner."

"I feared it. I might get Col. Oakdale—but his hard swearing and sudden impulses are not to be trusted."

"How would old Mr. Dowley answer?"

"John Dowley? He could hardly be induced to ride within a mile of the premises. He believes old Winkle is mad, and should be confined. If the old maid insists upon having Lowe, she cannot be baulked. But he must be closely watched. Good-night. I will see the Emperor in the morning, and cause him to dwell upon the idea of an Empress. I will tender him my carriage to send for the ladies. You know it requires four horses to drag his. There will be seats for four—and you must contrive to occupy one of them."

They parted, and pursued different directions. And a third person, who had been listening in an arbor, separated only by a plank fence from the street, glided into the cottage to which the garden was attached. This was Lowe's old housekeeper. She entered the young man's chamber, as she was privileged to do at all times, without ceremony. Her master was sitting at a table covered with books and papers, where he had been writing. Seeing by the excited features of his old servant that something out of the usual routine of domestic occurrences was to be communicated, he leaned back calmly in his great chair and awaited the issue.

The handsome features of Lowe did not undergo the slightest alteration during the housekeeper's recital, with the exception of a scarcely perceptible shade on his pale forehead, flitting momentarily past, when the name of Lucy Winkle was mentioned in connection with his own.

"You are discreet, Mrs. Edwards," said Lowe, when she ceased speaking. "I do not perceive any reason why I should be disquieted by the surmises of the people, it is the case every where. One's neighbors would know one's occupation, place of nativity, means of support, objects and desires. Very well. If I do not choose to tell them, let them guess. It cannot annoy me. But it must not affect Miss Winkle's peace of mind, either. Therefore, Edwards—No. I will remain. She is a fine lovely girl, and as pure and amiable as lovely. I have seen Mr. Roland. He is a bad man. Well, I have also seen roues—often. Like the rest, he is a contriver of stratagems. What is the name of the dirty-faced boy who delivered the peace-offering to the aunt?"

"Bill Dizzle, your honor."

"He, too, is employed by him. Where is he now?"

"In the kitchen with the cook, your honor."

"I suppose so. The enemy's camp is the place for a spy. But that lad is not bad by nature. Send him to me."

The frog catcher appeared at the door with his invariable smile, his long locks, and his mud colored cap on his head.

"Come in, Bill," said Lowe. "I want a conversation with you. Sit down. I believe I am your best customer in this village, eh?"

"They say frogs is nasty!"

"And mushrooms?"

"They're afeard of being pisoned!"

"But you and I know better.'

"And Sargent Blore, and the emperor."

"Yes. And do we consume all you can procure?"

"The sargent eats a dozen hind-quarters at a time—and your ooman pays me four dollars a week. He! he! he! how the butcher would stare if he knowed it! But Mrs. Edards bound me not to tell. People say you must be poor, you buy so little, and live in such a little house."

"Be sure, Bizzle ——"

"Dizzle—Biddy calls me Bizzle."

"Well. Be sure always to make Mrs. Edwards pay you the money down, so that if we run away, you will lose nothing."

"I aint afeard. Sargent Blore says he'll pay Mrs. Edards' debts if she can't. He says he's in love with her, 'cause she is sensible 'nuff to 'preciate frogs and mushroons—"

"The himpudent one-harmed, one-heyed, one-legged himp of satan!" said Mrs. Edwards, coming in at that moment, with some dew-moistened roses, and with a face flushed to the eyebrows

"Edwards," said Lowe, smiling, "you must not be angry with the sergeant for admiring you. You can't prevent it, and he can't help it."

"She's gone, like a shot," said Bill, as the old woman vanished muttering something to herself.

"You must not say a word about this to the sergeant, Dizzle."

"No, sir. If I was to, he'd be dead sure to come and marry her in spite of herself. I know his natur, sir."

"Eh? Then you may tell him. I should like to witness the progress of such a siege. But, Bill, don't Mr. Roland sometimes throw profitable jokes in your way?"

"He's always paying me for doing something or other. He's a rich gentleman—and he's good to me and my sister."

"Your sister?"

"Yes. He let's her have her cabin and patch for nothing. I stay with her sometimes, and sometimes at the emperor's. I would like to stay here a little, too, if you've no objection."

"I have none in the world. But why would you like to stay here a little?"

"'Cause Patty O'Pan, in the kitchen, is good to me; and

she shows me how to cook frogs in every way—and she knows a mushroon from a frog-stool—and she lets me buss her."

"Buss her? What's that? Oh, I recollect. I suppose that's one of her sauces. But your sister—has she a family?"

"Only one—a little gal. I don't know where it's from, or how it come there. Them two and me is all."

"Is she a widow?"

"She wasn't never married, sir, that I knows on."

"Oh, I forgot that. Then, Mr. Roland likes you to tell him all the news you hear, and all the things you see, and he pays you for your trouble?"

"Yes, sir. But Mrs. Edards won't say anything, and Patty O'Pan don't know nothing."

"But you can see for yourself."

"I see only you, and your books, and such things. But that's not what he wants."

"What does he want?"

"He wants to find out if you aint a counterfeiter, a gambler, a robber, a murderer, or something of that sort."

"And do you think I am any of these, Bill?" asked Lowe, smiling.

"Blazes! No. You're a gentleman, and a nicer one nor him."

"Thank you, Dizzle. There's a dollar. Now remember, we are to be good friends, and you shall come when you choose to see my Patty Pan—"

"I called her that once, sir, and she slapped my jaws."

"O'Pan, then. But you must not repeat my conversation to him."

"I won't tell only what you want me to."

"You may say I am very poor, and can't get any employment. That will do."

"La! I saw you pitch out the trout once! and knock down the ducks right and left as they sailed round! If you'd only go in partnership with me, and let me sell 'em in the city, we'd make a fortin!"

"We'll talk that over some other time. Good-by, now."

Bill bowed unconsciously and withdrew.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WINKLE CHATEAU—THE GAME RESUMED.

Mr. Roland's carriage, containing Miss Wilsome Winkle and her neice, Mr. Lowe and Gusset, drove up to the portico of Mr. Napoleon Winkle's fine mansion. Sentinels, in trappings resembling the uniform of the imperial guard, were promenading in front. These were some of Mr. Winkle's tenantry, who had been drilled that morning by Sergeant Blore.

Mr. Winkle was seated in his great chair in his library, looking over sundry charts spread out on a table. He was dressed in the old style, wearing tight breeches, silk stockings, and shoes and buckles. We have said he was fat. He was also nearly bald.

When the company was announced, he arose and advanced with dignity. But the one whom he first accosted with friendly greeting was Gusset.

"Why, brother," said Miss Wilsome, "where are your glasses? That is Gusset! Don't you know *me?*"

"Certainly I do, sister," he replied, shaking her hand very heartily—"I did not look at her face, and supposed it was my niece."

"She don't resemble Lucy. But let me introduce Mr. Lowe, my partner at whist."

"I am happy to see you, Mr. Lowe," said Mr. Winkle, with great politeness; and then, a moment after, added: "Lowe—Lowe—I have heard that name before——"

"Oh, very likely, sir, as I have been residing in Babbleton a number of weeks," remarked the young man.

"Lowe! I hope, sir, your first name is not Hudson?"

"It is not, sir. It is Edmund."

"You are not a son of Sir Hudson's?"

"I am not, indeed," continued Lowe, smiling.

"What nonsense, brother," said Miss Wilsome. "Sir Hudson was a middle-aged man when Governor of St. Helena; and as Bonaparte died a quarter of a century ago——"

"Very true, Wilsome—very true. Come, have my arm. The table is in the next room, and the cards and counters on

it. And there are refreshments on the sideboard. Let the young people follow."

"Where is Mr Roland?" asked Wilsome, looking round in vain for that gentleman, upon entering the room in which they were to play.

"I have a note from him," said her brother, fumbling for it in his vest pocket. "He says he has been suddenly called away in a matter of great urgency and importance; and that he may not possibly be able to return before the evening."

"No matter!" said Wilsome, in her masculine voice. "He pays no attention to the game. What shall we do? Lucy is not fond of whist, and would rather be rambling about the grounds. Mr. Lowe plays admirably, but he is my partner. How shall we be matched?"

"I'll have Miss Gusset—and see if we don't beat you the first rubber! Where is she? Left in the library! What barbarians we are! But, *n'importe;* I will conduct her hither."

Mr. Napoleon Winkle withdrew for that purpose, and seemed to remain away something longer than his sister deemed necessary, and she awaited him with a fretful impatience, while Lucy and Lowe admired the prospect from a window.

The lagging behind in the library had not been accidental on the part of Gusset. But what transpired there, between herself and Mr. Winkle, must remain among the undeveloped secrets of diplomacy, for there were no witnesses present to divulge it. Yet it might have been surmised from the agreeable expression of their countenances when they finally appeared and assumed their places at the table, that the brief conference which had been held, like that of the famous emperors at Tilsit, had not been an unpleasant one.

When they commenced the game, Lucy escaped through the large French window, and was soon careering over the lawn, followed by her faithful spaniel. When, panting with the exercise, and laden with roses, she ascended a small knoll a hundred paces from the house, and rested in a turret or pavilion, which had been constructed by her uncle for his own convenience. This small isolated building, resembling a lighthouse, in having windows on every side, was so thickly overgrown with vines that one could view from within it every field

on the plantation (or country in Europe), and remain himself unseen. From this place most of (the Winkles) Napoleon's orders of a military character were issued.

Lucy, amidst the perfume of her roses and honeysuckles, the thrilling echoes of the orioles from the tall elms, the pure sunlight of a calm day, the harmonious buzzing of insects through the peaceful air, yielded to the influence of the moment, and almost unconsciously warbled one of the happy songs which occasionally gushed forth from her innocent heart.

"Why, Dew!" said she, ceasing abruptly in the midst of a stanza, as she heard a low growl from her spaniel; "that is a horrid accompaniment. If my ditty is displeasing, you shall hear no more of it. What is the matter? How his eyes do gleam! Dew!" The spaniel sprang up and barked fiercely; and the next moment Mr. Ralph Roland emerged from a cluster of lilac bushes near the pavilion.

"Be quiet, Dew," said he. "Don't you know me?" he continued, ascending the steps of the pavilion, and casting a half-careless glance at the still threatening dog, as it growled and whined after returning to the feet of its mistress.

"Mr. Roland," said Lucy, "I thought you were to be absent to-day. Did you not say so in a note to my uncle?"

"I did, my dear creature," said he, throwing himself into a rustic seat beside her; "but it was merely a stratagem for your benefit."

"*My* benefit! How, sir?"

"You know, if I had been present, your aunt would have compelled me to play; and so you would have been under the necessity of entertaining your uncle, or of being entertained by him."

"And I assure you I am always very agreeably entertained by him! Yet I am not quite certain your presence would have released my uncle from the game. He seemed to be enjoying it very heartily when I left them."

"Oh, Gusset was his partner!"

"How did you know that? Mr. Roland, it seems to me very mysterious, that you should be observing what passes in the house—or chateau, as my uncle calls it—remaining yourself unseen. And, then, appearing suddenly before me from a covert, unannounced——"

"Dew announced me," said he, smiling, and taking up one of the roses Lucy had dropped.

"Yes, he announced you; but it was no friendly greeting. I have some faith in Dew's discernment."

"Upon my soul," said Roland, laughing, "I am inclined to believe you are serious, for you have done nothing but frown ever since you beheld me."

"And Dew has never ceased to show his teeth," said she.

"Oh, I will love Dew, if he will permit me. You recollect the saying—'Love me, love my dog.' But, seriously, my dear Miss Winkle, whether it shall ever be my good fortune to conciliate Dew or not, believe me, upon the honor of a man, that I have long loved you——"

"Mr. Roland!" cried she, attempting to rise, while Dew, not knowing whether or not his mistress was held contrary to her will, crouched at her feet, his eyes fixed with a steady fierceness upon Roland's face.

"Stay, my sweet Lucy," said Roland. "You know I am rich. I am not old. All I possess—my heart, my hand, my fortune—are at your feet—— Deuce take the dog!" cried he, starting up, and shaking Dew from the skirt of his coat, upon which the animal had fastened. Feeling himself slightly bruised by the teeth of the dog, he bestowed a smart kick upon him, and sent him yelping under Lucy's chair.

"Mr. Roland—leave me!" said Lucy.

"Be not offended, my sweet girl," continued the wooer. "My proposals are honorable, and you shall be——"

"Say no more, sir. It is distressing to me. I cannot love you. Let that suffice."

"You might, in time. But if you did not, that would be my misfortune. As for yourself, be assured I love you now, have loved you long, and would continue to do so for ever."

"Cease, cease this conversation, Mr. Roland; and let me return to the house. It is painful to hear you. I would not have you love me, and you can never have either my heart or my hand."

"Cruel Lucy! But you are now discomposed. Calm reflection, and the advice of your family, may change your mind. Recollect that you may be disappointed in your expectations. Your aunt is capricious, and your uncle may marry."

"Sir, my mother's humble dwelling would be preferable to all the wealth in the world, if obtained by means of an alliance with one whose presence would be an unceasing source of disgust and misery!"

"Unjust and unreasonable girl! Think that the humble dwelling and the few pitiful acres you allude to, do not belong to your mother."

"How, sir?"

"The property is encumbered. There is a mortgage on it for three-fourths its value. Then be not so disdainful. You are poor, and I am rich."

"Release me, sir!" continued Lucy, striving in vain to escape, while Dew continued to bark. "If I am poor, sir, I am independent. Beware how you insult me."

"I do not insult you, my dearest girl," said Roland. "I would save you from the sneers of the world. The offer I make cannot be deemed an insult. I would save you——"

"From what, sir? Nobody has sneered at me."

"I would save you from the fatal toils of an impostor——"

"Who?"

"That man now sitting opposite your aunt. You know not who he is—whence he comes—his occupation—his character——"

"Sir, you *do* insult me—or at least you grossly offend, by such gratuitous declaration!" said Lucy, blushing deeply, and then turning deathly pale.

"I see how it is, Lucy. I should have warned you sooner. I will release you now. I desire you will consult your mother and your uncle. In their hands and yours I place my hopes. Farewell—or if we meet again to-day, pray banish that frown."

"Mr. Roland," replied the girl, now released, but no longer inclined to fly, "leave me to my solitary meditations. But, before you go, be assured that I will never love or wed you. It will not be necessary for me to mention the subject to any one, unless you resolve to persecute me with your addresses, which would only give me pain. My mother and uncle, whatever might be their opinion or desire, would never attempt to constrain me to any step repugnant to my wishes. Therefore, if you would have my respect and friendship, never again refer to the subject."

"At least, you can have no objection," said Roland, throwing a scrutinising glance at the fair girl as he departed, "to my unmasking the impostor who has taken such convenient lodgings in Babbleton?"

"I have no right to object, sir, to any thing in which I am not interested."

"Then why that change of color, Lucy?"

"I see it not, sir. Mr. Roland, take care that you do not injure an innocent person! Mr. Lowe is not the base man you suppose. Beware how you assail a stranger, of whom you know nothing, upon the mere conjectures of the idle gossips of the village! However, I doubt not he will be prepared to vindicate himself, whenever any one shall venture to charge him with the commission of a criminal act. And until he fails to repel any such affronts upon his character, rely upon it, he will be received as a welcome guest at my mother's humble dwelling."

When she ceased speaking, Roland retired without uttering any reply; and the brave girl immediately bestowed all her attention upon poor Dew, whom she caressed for his timely defence of his mistress.

Soon after Roland might have been seen galloping through a distant lane towards his own estate. And at intervals messengers on horseback were sent by Sergeant Blore, from different parts of the Winkle empire, with despatches for his chief. So that a continual clatter of hoofs was kept up during the progress of the game.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GAME INTERRUPTED BY THE NEWS OF A SUDDEN INVASION.

"Read that despatch for me, partner," said Mr. Winkle, passing a small square piece of paper across the table to Gusset. It had just been brought in by one of Sergeant Blore's messengers.

"Why don't you read it yourself?" asked Wilsome, lifting her eyes from the cards in her hand.

"Because, sister, I left my glasses in my cabinet; and although I can distinguish the knave of hearts without them, I would find it difficult to decipher Blore's confounded crabbed pencil scratches. And I doubt whether you could do it with-

eat your spectacles, which I am sure you are ashamed to wear in company."

"I am not ashamed, brother."

Gusset reads: "*The old boar and a flock of crows are eating the dead horse in the north fields.*"

"What does that mean, brother?" demanded Miss Wilsome.

"It means that the Russians and the Cossacks are nibbling again at the Pole. No matter, so they don't disturb Saxony. Such is my answer."

As the game proceeded, the following additional notes were received, and read by the milliner, while Mr. Lowe, with much difficulty, preserved his gravity.

"*The Billy goats are fighting again on the hill.*"

"The Swiss!" said Mr. Winkle. "The cantons are never quiet. They will have to be absorbed. Tell Blore to have them chastised, and warned. He may fire a few platoons with blank cartridge."

After this a long silence ensued, and Gusset played a great many trumps, which, with the four honors she held, won the game.

"It is my turn to shuffle. There will be no more such hands!" said Miss Wilsome, casting an ill-natured glance at the milliner. It is game and game. This time we will win the rubber."

And it seemed that the prediction so confidently made, was about to be fulfilled; for the first hand won nine tricks. The honors were divided between Miss Wilsome and her partner, as well as all the valuable cards.

It was just when Miss Wilsome was exulting over such signal success, and anticipating a speedy triumph, that one of the sentinels ran in and made the following announcement, which he said the sergeant did not have time to write:

"The bull's swam across the slough, sir, and is trying to get into the orchard among the cows."

"We are invaded! The British! The British!" cried the old man, leaping up and overturning the table. "My these! My horse!" he continued, rushing out upon the lawn. "Bring up the guards! Sound the alarm! To the field! Follow me, soldiers! The enemy is upon our soil!"

Consternation prevailed. The drum beat to arms, and the sentinels fired their muskets; and before Miss Wilsome

had sufficiently recovered from her paroxysm of passion to utter a word, her excited brother was in the saddle, and galloping towards the enemy, at the head of a small party of his retainers. They soon reached the scene of the invasion, which was plainly in view from the pavilion, and where Lucy was joined by her aunt and her partner, as well as by Gusset.

The orchard fence ran parallel with the narrow sheet of water which separated France from England, as laid down on Mr. Winkle's map. The latter country, a marsh meadow, was usually inhabited by the bull, but he was occasionally in the habit of making incursions upon the neighboring tracts.

The enormous animal was now throwing up the earth with his feet, and bellowing fearfully, while the herd of cows and heifers within the inclosure, so far from being alarmed at his presence, had drawn nearer to the fence which separated them.

On rushed Napoleon, followed by his little band of heroes. But, fearless and obedient as they had often proved on other occasions, they faltered on this, when they perceived, that instead of being panic-stricken, the bull faced about and coolly awaited the attack. Turning his head, and seeing the hesitation among his followers, Winkle drew rein and ordered them to come up. They did so very reluctantly.

"Soldiers!" said he, "let me not have cause to be offended at your conduct this day. The eyes of my guests in yonder pavilion are upon us!"

"But that dratted bull looks like he wanted to poke some of us," said one of the guard.

"What then?" exclaimed the furious Winkle. "Are victories won without risk of wounds, and even death? Would you purchase glory without paying its price in blood? I am ashamed of you! Surrender your gun into the hands of that boy in front. Retire in disgrace from the field. You are ignominiously dismissed! Comrades," he continued, "advance and fire. And when you have discharged your guns, charge yourselves upon the enemy. He will fly before you!"

They formed a line in front of the bull, extending from the fence down the water's edge, and levelling their guns, fired as they had been ordered. But when the smoke cleared away, instead of seeing the bull in full retreat, they beheld him rushing directly towards them, his head down, and his tail rampant over his back. Winkle continued to spur forward, but

his followers took to their heels and fled away. Some leaped the fence and climbed the apple trees, while others never paused until they were under shelter of the castle. All threw away their arms.

It must be owned that Winkle was not insensible to some symptoms of trepidation when he beheld the great eyes of his foe glaring upon him. But the eyes in the pavilion were upon him also, and it would not do to fly; and although several instances occurred to his mind wherein his great prototype had embraced the means in his power to escape a sudden peril, still he resolved to face the infuriated animal. Yet it should not perhaps be denied, that he had some hope of a reconciliation at the last moment, forgetting that the fatal affront had already been given by himself, in offending the nostrils of his enemy with the fumes of sulphur. Therefore, that nothing on his part might be omitted, as soon as his followers had receded out of hearing, he commenced his overtures as follows: "Come Johnny, my fine fellow, you have taken salt from my hand many a time. Be quiet, now—my fine fellow." Johnny recognised his master and paused in mid-career, and in the centre of the road, but still kept his head down in a menacing attitude. Long he remained thus, as motionless as a statue, while a low moan escaped him resembling the deep mutterings preceding an earthquake.

Winkle, supposing the victory gained, deliberately dismounted from his horse, and approached Johnny on foot, as he had often done before, for the purpose of caressing him. But it did not occur to him that he had never attempted to approach the animal with a broad scarlet sash enveloping his chest. Hence, when he was within a few paces of his huge minion, he was astonished to see him leap forward to meet him more like the spring of a tiger upon a lamb than the motion of friendly greeting. Winkle turned, and fled with all his might, without pausing to reflect upon the consequences of such an example. But he was too fat to escape by means of his own locomotion; and his steed, taking the alarm, had fled away in advance!

On ran Winkle, and after him the bull, while cries of alarm proceeded from the pavilion, and curses were uttered by Sergeant Blore, who strove in vain to rally the men.

At last Winkle gave up in despair, and fell down upon his face, just at the moment when the bull had slightly turned

aside one of his huge horns for the purpose of transfixing him. Escaping immediate death by his opportune relinquishment of the field, Winkle nevertheless felt the point of the horn glance harmlessly over the posterior portion of his body. But it ploughed along under the broad scarlet sash, and a moment after the corpulent hero was dangling in the air! Enraged to desperation upon finding that his victim could not be easily detached from his new position, the great monster ran frantically to and fro along the margin of the water, still bearing his captive aloft, whose legs and arms were in continual motion, as if swimming in ether. And now the bull was followed backwards and forwards by all the cows and heifers in the orchard, and by all the terriers of the neighborhood, which kept up a continual clatter at his heels. The only words the poor man was heard to utter were, "Help! help! rescue! rescue!"

Witnessing such a scene from the pavilion, Mr. Lowe, touched by the distress of Lucy, united his endeavors with those of Sergeant Blore to induce the men to go to the relief of their chieftain. But to no purpose. They were immovable, and the sergeant himself could do nothing, having but one leg, one eye, and one arm.

"Then let loose yonder bull-dog," cried Lowe, "and bid him follow me!"

Saying this, the young man seized a sheet which had been spread out on the grass by the washerwoman, and ran off towards the scene of action. As soon as the bull beheld him he prepared for battle. Pawing up the earth, and bellowing furiously, the enormous monster came down at full speed, with Winkle still dangling from his right hand horn. Lowe was self-possessed. He adjusted the sheet upon his arm in the manner he had seen the Spaniards do, and when the critical moment arrived, succeeded admirably in throwing it over the animal's head, and in making his escape by springing dexterously aside. The bull, being thus foiled, and blinded by the sheet, shook his head violently, and Winkle flew through the air like some great fragment cast up by a raging volcano. He sailed over the prickly bushes on the margin of the ditch, and fell head foremost among the spatter-docks, which grew half in mud and half in water. The place where he fell was as soft as a bed of down. But he came very near alighting upon the head of Bill Dizzle, who was so intently engaged in

the pursuit of a large frog, that he had not heeded the uproar in the vicinity.

"Blue blazes! What a tremendous frog!" cried Bill, when Winkle dropped into the ditch, bespattering him all over, and filling his eyes with filthy water, so that for several moments he was incapable of seeing any thing.

"No! it's a turkle!" said he, when he had succeeded in wiping the muddy water from his eyes, and beheld the crown of Winkle's head emerging from the broad leaves of the spatter docks. Both the cocked hat and the wig of Napoleon had been lost, and his bald head having been submerged, really resembled in color and shape the back of a turtle or terapin.

"No! Blazes!—no!" continued Bill. "It's—it's—blazes! what is it?"

"It's Winkle, Bill. Help me out of the ditch. Take me by the hand and lead me. I cannot see."

"So it is! Oh, gonny! what a black face! Take holt of the prongs of my spear, sir."

"Wait a moment, Bill. See if the bull is near us"

Bill crept under the bushes towards the road and witnessed the finale of the scene.

The bull, finding himself relieved of the burden which had in some degree embarrassed his movements, soon tore off the sheet that obstructed his vision, and more enraged than ever, rushed upon his new assailant. But Lowe avoided him by springing behind a tough hickory sapling which grew on the side of the road. Although the young tree was not greater in diameter than a man's leg, yet it sufficed to repel the assaults of the frantic animal. Whenever the bull made a lunge, the elastic sapling, after yielding an instant to the force of the blow, would rebound with such power as to throw back the animal on his haunches. The bull, supposing this to be the resistance of his antagonist, grew more incensed than ever, and redoubled his assaults. Finally the young tree was yielding under the effects of such repeated thrusts, and ceased to repel them with the vigor it did at first, and Lowe, expecting every instant to see his only remaining defence prostrated, was upon the eve of giving up all for lost, when he heard the short deep barking of the bull-dog. A moment after, he saw the teeth of his brindle deliverer fastened upon the cheek of the bull. Uttering a startling yell, the huge monster threw up his head so violently that the flesh was torn away, and the dog

went sailing over the bushes, and fell sprawling into the ditch beside its master.

"Blazes!" cried Bill, who had retreated back to his first position—"the frogs will be frightened for a month!"

Meantime the bull was smarting with the wound he had received, and instead of renewing the attack upon Lowe, gazed towards the ditch, as if to ascertain whether the dog was *hors de combat*. But hearing Brindle's sharp bark as soon as his head was above water, the great bull, now stricken with terror, turned about and began to retreat. Brindle, however, sprang from under the bushes and seized him on the other cheek, and this time he held him so firmly that he could not be shaken off. The bull roared, and rolled in the dust; but Brindle would not relinquish his hold. Finally, seeing the sergeant at last rallying his forces, which had been successfully appealed to by Lucy to rescue her uncle and the young gentleman, the animal gave up the contest, and rushed into the deepest part of the water, where, by dint of submerging his head, the half-drowned dog was forced to open his jaws. The bull then escaped into his own territory.

Lucy, when she witnessed the expulsion of the bull, supposing her uncle might be slain, and not knowing that Lowe had escaped without injury, was overwhelmed with tumultuous palpitations, and fainted in the arms of her aunt. Now, Wilsome had done nothing but abuse her brother from the moment he abandoned the game, when she was upon the eve of winning the rubber. And she was in no pleasant humor with Lowe for joining in the foolish fracas, as she termed it. More than once she had proposed that the game should be concluded with a dummy, as her brother's card had been exposed. Her own cards were still grasped in her hand when Lucy fainted.

"Unlace her, Gusset," said Miss Wilsome, with petulance. "Throw out the roses, and empty the vase of water in her face—but don't spill any of it on my dress."

Gusset obeyed with trembling hands, a livid hue, and chattering teeth.

"She is reviving," said Wilsome. "It wasn't much. My brother is not killed, I know—but if he should be, what else could he expect, always firing off guns, and fancying bears are Russians, and bulls the British. I am his sister, it is true—but I could not lament his death as much as a sister

e to lose his life in any of these mad pranks.
inate black, and have made up my mind never
ing. So, if my brother's neck be broken by
Here she paused, and placing Lucy in the
, steadily regarded Gusset, who was gasp-

st!" she exclaimed, "what in the world are
e you going to swoon, too? He's nothing to
u what it is—if you have the ill-manners to
face. I shall go off and leave you to recover
i can! It is an impudent, indecent habit! I
So, now, you have some color. But pick up
r fell with the backs up, and I did not see
ne must be played out. Mercy on us!" she
ie beheld her brother approaching on foot,
ly with the black mud of the marsh, and fol-
hole rabble of his retainers, ever and anon
xxas.
ieaven, he is safe!" said Lucy.
ed her aunt. "Do you call him safe in that
He had better be dead, than live in such a

an soon be removed!" cried Gusset, rising,
out to rush forward and assist in the purifi-
comfited chieftain.
ou mean, Gusset?" asked Miss Wilsome, and
thrusting back the milliner." If you stir a
n and soil your hands, I'll send you home,
mistress here, I would have you know. The
nished. Let Blore take his master to the
play with a dummy."
' no injury has been done!" said Lowe, enter-

ıy basket of frogs," said Bill Dizzle, follow-
ıll swam away."
f it," said Miss Wilsome; "and I hope you
them again." Bill gave her a look of mingled
l contempt, and then withdrew.
rere in great peril," said Lucy, addressing

at when I saw the roots of the friendly sap-
he furious assaults of the animal, I measured

the height of the fence with my eye, hoping to be able to clear it at one bound. I think I could have done so."

While her brother was undergoing the prescribed ablution at the pump, Wilsome insisted upon the game being played out with a dummy. But when they were seated at the table, it was discovered that a card was missing; and luckily for the rest, it was one which had fallen from Miss Wilsome's own hand. It could not be found, and so a new pack was called for, and a new deal submitted to.

But before the thirteenth card had been dealt to Dummy, Mr. Napoleon Winkle made his appearance among them, in fresh costume, and resumed his seat opposite Miss Griselda Gusset.

"Having had a tilt with Johnny Bull," said he, in high spirits, "we will now have a bout with the four kings."

"Brother, how can you treat a serious matter so lightly," asked Miss Wilsome. "If you had witnessed the fainting scene in the pavilion, after your flight over the hedge——"

"You did not faint, did you, sister?"

"I!"

"But who did?"

"Lucy—and——"

"Lucy, then, feared to lose her uncle?"

"Certainly, uncle," said Lucy.

"You are my pet. But did any one else faint?"

"Gusset would have fainted, if I had permitted it," said Miss Wilsome. "And I am sure I don't know why she should have done so."

Mr. Winkle cast a meaning glance at Gusset, who kept her eyes fixed upon the cards and remained silent.

"As for my part," said Mr. Lowe, "I must crave Mr. Winkle's pardon."

"What for?" asked Mr. Winkle.

"I thought you had surely observed my inexcusable conduct, sir, at the moment when I encountered the foe."

"It was my salvation. You did a meritorious action, which I shall never forget. You saved my life, sir, and I would be happy to see you an inmate of my family, sir. Why not abandon your little tenement, and live with me? You may command any thing that is mine, sir."

"If you were to do any such thing," said Wilsome, "it

would not be two months before you would be fit for a mad-house."

"Pooh, sister!" said Winkle, "you have your cards, your monkeys, your cats and parrots—every thing but a husband—and I have my peculiar amusements. Then why do you continually denounce my diversions, and term them the result of insanity? It is simply because you have an idiosyncrasy yourself! Oh, I have been reading a work on madness! I know the symptoms. But, Mr. Lowe—I know you are not Sir Hudson, now—why should you crave my pardon?"

"For my laughter. I could not avoid giving vent to it when I met you borne aloft on the bull's horn."

"Nor no human being could have refrained from it," said Miss Wilsome, smiling significantly at her partner.

"Lucy refrained, and so did Miss Griselda!" said Napoleon.

"Gusset thought it her humble duty to follow Lucy's swooning example—but I arrested her in time."

"If your monkey had been in my predicament," continued her brother, "I doubt not you would have manifested more concern."

"Jocko? Bless my life! I believe I came away without locking his chain to my bed-post. And he would not permit any one else to do it! I shall be uneasy until I get back to the city."

"Here are the city papers," said Mr. Winkle, taking them from the hand of one of his servants just returned from the village. "And here is a letter for you, Wilsome. Perhaps it contains some account of your dear monkey."

And it did. The old lady, in her eagerness to learn the contents of the letter, forgetting the presence of her partner, adjusted her glasses, and putting down the cards, read as follows:

"My Dear Aunt:—It becomes my melancholy duty to announce a sad calamity—an unexpected suicide—which must affect you deeply. This morning poor Jocko was found suspended from the eve of the portico, and quite dead. That he did it himself, must be evident from the fact that no human being would be likely to climb down to the edge of the roof. It seems that he had driven a large nail into the wood through the last link of his chain, and then sprang over, either dislo-

cuting his neck, or producing suffocation. I could not bear his struggles, from the distant chamber I occupied, or you should not have been called upon to lament his untimely end. Poor Jocko! As the weather is very warm, I will have his body taken down and packed in ice. It will keep, dear aunt, until I receive your instructions, in regard to the disposition you would have made of it. Every thing shall be done according to your orders. You need not hasten your return to the city. I am quite comfortable here, and the house is kept very quiet from morning till night. My love to mother, sister, uncle, all.

Your affectionate Nephew,

WALTER WINKLE.

P. S.—The parrot has learnt some new words. He must have heard the neighbors utter them, as you know parrots merely imitate sounds without understanding the meaning of language. Tell uncle Napoleon I have bought him another mortar for throwing large shells, and will ship it immediately. Say to Mr. Lowe, I have found some flies that will make the trout jump into the grass. Tell old Gusset half the buttons are off the shirts she made me."

"Old! The ungrateful whelp!" cried Gusset.

"Gusset!" said Miss Wilsome, putting down the letter which she had been unconsciously reading aloud, and weeping bitter tears all the while—"how dare you call any member of my family a whelp? Do you forget that the Winkles made you what you are?"

"I humbly beg pardon, madam," said Gusset, in a quivering voice. "I was merely jesting."

"I thought so, by Jove!" cried the emperor. "She was not in earnest, sister. Miss Griselda is famous for her mild temper, and amiability of disposition. And Walter meant nothing. He is a noble boy—and may this right hand forget its cunning when I forget him—"

"Walter has always been my pet," said Gusset.

"That's right—love him for my sake."

"Bring my bonnet! I must go!" cried Miss Wilsome, rising. "I shall never survive it. My heart is broken. Poor Jocko!"

"Don't, sister, don't indulge such ridiculous lamentations

over a nasty monkey, after regarding unmoved the narrow escape of your brother from a dreadful death."

"My bonnet! Brother, Jocko was both more rational and affectionate than yourself."

"I supposed you would say so. There is but one woman living capable of appreciating me——"

"Who?" demanded his sister.

"Not you—but you shall know some of these days."

"Your uncle intends to marry," Lowe whispered in Lucy's ear—"and it may be the wisest thing he could do, for——"

"Mr. Lowe!" said Miss Wilsome, "will you not attend me to the carriage?"

"Oh, certainly!" was the reply. And rising, the young gentleman conducted the aunt and niece out of the room, leaving Mr. Napoleon Winkle and the retired milliner, who had won the rubber at last, to follow at their leisure. But their leisure seeming to be too much prolonged, Miss Wilsome despatched several messengers to hasten them; and Gusset was finally handed into the coach by no less a gallant than the great proprietor of the palace.

During the drive back to the village, Lucy and Lowe conjecturing the nature of each other's thoughts—the tragical end of the monkey—could not avoid exchanging mirthful glances, which being perceived by Miss Wilsome, they were rebuked in this manner.

"How indifferent you both seem to my affliction. Jocko was dearer to me than many a husband is to his wife. He was obedient, silent, and watchful: and quite as handsome as some of the beaux who captivate our poor hearts. In another year I would have learnt him to play whist, and then I should have been contented with my lot. I suppose the law would not have permitted him to have my fortune—and in that case you would have inherited it, Lucy. But now I have lost my Jocko, and you a fortune—for I will certainly marry."

Lucy and Lowe strove to elongate their faces upon hearing this announcement—but in vain.

CHAPTER VIII.

MATRIMONIAL SALLIES—WAR AND WOMEN.

Arrived at the cottage of Mrs. Winkle in Babbleton, the company dispersed as follows. Gusset, who had not opened her mouth, although her eyes looked volumes, since she had been escorted down the broad stairway of the chateau by the emperor, hastened away on foot to her own domicile, without once casting a glance behind. Edmund Lowe, after assisting the ladies to alight, strode deliberately across the street to his own dwelling. Miss Wilsome Winkle, with a freshet of tears, washing gullies through the paint on her cheeks, hastened up to her chamber to enjoy in solitude the luxury of mourning the loss of a beloved object.

Mrs. Winkle, drawing Lucy's arm through her own, led her into the rear sitting room, laughing at the aspect of her sister-in-law, and at the mishap of her brother, which had been narrated to her by an eye-witness.

"Sit down, Lucy," said the merry widow. "I am glad we are alone. You must know, that while you have been enjoying yourselves in the country, I have been entertained in town. Mr. Ralph Roland has spent several hours with me—child! why do you turn pale at the mention of his name? No! my eyes deceived me—you have a beautiful color—but surely I can hear the beating of your heart. I say Mr. Roland was here, and——"

"Proposed to marry me. Was it not so, mother?"

"No—not precisely so. But he desired my permission to woo you."

"And did he obtain it?"

"Not positively. But I promised to confer with you. I thought the fellow was addressing Virginia Oakdale."

"He addresses all who will permit him. I cannot permit him to address me, mother. There is something in his smile—in his looks, in his attitudes and movements, which fills me with dread and dislike."

"He is somewhat advanced in years, too; I think he must be forty. My dear child, never think I would desire you to agree to any match repugnant to your inclinations

Nevertheless, Roland is called a handsome man—is rich, and if not popular, it is thought, notwithstanding, his party will succeed in electing him to Congress. On the other hand, my child, it is my duty to apprise you that you have no fortune. Even this little property is mortgaged for four thousand dollars—and the mortgage is held by Mr. Roland——"

"Oh, mother!" cried Lucy.

"Why do you tremble so? why this alarm, my dear Lucy? Have we not been merry in our poverty? Wealth could not have made us more happy. Besides, we are not so destitute as to be altogether dependent. Old Dibble, our gardener, has sold eight hundred dollars worth of vegetables since winter. He has found out all about my condition, and this mortgage too, and he says there is always a balance to our credit in bank sufficient to pay the interest."

"Thank heaven! Then he cannot distress us!" said Lucy.

"Who, child?"

"Roland. Mother, he is a bad man, and I would not be in his power for worlds. But we need not be alarmed. Uncle Napoleon——"

"Mr. Roland informs me that it is the determination of your uncle to marry. If this be so, we must not rely upon receiving further aid from that quarter. Your uncle, I know, has a very generous disposition; but his wife may be differently constituted. Your aunt——"

"Oh, mother, she too is resolved to marry. She announced her purpose to-day."

"Married or single—she could never be relied on. She has too many strange caprices of minor importance, to bestow a thought upon the necessities of her relatives. Besides, she never can be convinced that your father lost his fortune. She cannot conceive how it could be possible for the most respected and ablest member of her family to lose his patrimony."

"Then, mother," said Lucy. "I fear the worst!"

"Fear nothing. If Roland supposes that our destitution may make you submissive to a matrimonial project no having your hearty concurrence——"

"Mother—I despise the man!" said Lucy, proudly, and decisively.

"Enough, Lucy. He shall be properly answered. But, my child, we must be kind and respectful. Remember——"

"The mortgage! yes, I will remember it, mother—and for your sake, I will endeavor not to offend him."

"For my sake, Lucy!" cried Mrs. Winkle, laughing very heartily. "Why I have no fears. Providence will not forsake me. Old Dibble and his son never fail to raise enormous crops of potatoes, cabbages, peas, etc., when such things are scarce and high. I suppose if we pay the interest, there can be no danger of being turned adrift. And yet, my child, Mr. Roland named one thing which caused me a pang of fearful apprehension."

"What was it, mother?"

"His belief that our pale neighbor, Mr. Lowe, had a design upon your heart."

"I thought so! He said the same thing to me."

"To you? He did not mention having conversed with you in relation to such matters?"

"He had an interview with me, first; and if I had sanctioned his pretensions, he would never have sought your approbation. I repulsed him, mother. I told him, also, that my decision so unhesitatingly pronounced, was irrevocable and final; and then it was that he mentioned Mr. Lowe."

"He says there are strange reports in circulation regarding him, which, if true——"

"Ay, if true, mother! No doubt they have been fabricated by Roland himself, or some of the vile creatures he employs to subserve his base purposes!"

"Lucy, you speak with great zeal in behalf of this stranger. Ha! ha!—what would be the effect on him, if he were a listener!"

"He would hear a friend repelling the wicked aspersions of his enemies."

"But how do you know the reports are false?"

"I do not know it, mother—I merely believe him innocent, until proofs are produced to prove the contrary."

"That is right, Lucy. It seems to me that no stain of guilt could be stamped upon a brow so fair—of one so ingenuous. Yet I would not have my daughter's happiness depend upon the guilt or innocence of a *stranger*."

"Do not fear it, mother. Depend upon it your daughter

would be incapable of taking any irretrievable step without your advice and concurrence."

"Enough—enough!" cried Mrs. Winkle, embracing her beautiful Lucy, and smiling through her tears.

"Ma, I hear aunt Wilsome descending the stairs. Let her not find us discomposed." Her mother responded by hearty laughter.

"I shall go distracted!" said Miss Wilsome, the recent inroads on her cheeks having been carefully repaired before the mirror in her chamber. "What shall we do?"

"Play, of course," said Mrs. Winkle. "I'll send for Gusset, and we four will have a game."

"Very good," cried Wilsome, "we must not exact too much of Mr. Lowe's time. He is a perfect gentleman, sister."

"I am very glad you think so, Wilsome," was Mrs. Winkle's reply, "because a great many people think differently. They suspect him of being an impostor, and guilty of all manner of crimes."

"Sister," said Wilsome, with great energy of voice, and placing her hand on Mrs. Winkle's shoulder, "I am glad to hear it."

"Aunt Wilsome!" exclaimed Lucy.

"Nay, child—only glad to hear the silly gossips are circulating such ridiculous lies. Do not, for the world, contradict any of them. Let them talk—let them hate him. We shall then have a monopoly of his society. We care not what the vulgar herd of shopkeepers and milliners may say of *us*. I will spend more of my time in your pleasant village than formerly, since I am not to be comforted any more by Jocko. My house will be desolate now, unless I can prevail on Mr. Lowe to be a frequent visitor. But send for Gusset."

Biddy was despatched on the errand, but soon returned alone, and with looks of wonder.

"Why did she not come, Biddy?" asked Mrs. Winkle.

"She says why don't Miss Wilsome Winkle come to her house?"

"What! What's that?" cried Miss Wilsome, her forehead as red as her cheeks.

"She says why don't you visit her? and she has called on you once, and it's now your turn to call on her."

"The impudent hussy!" said Miss Wilsome, in great in-

"What does Mr. Winkle think of them?" asked Mrs. Winkle.

"That's why I'm here. He thinks pretty much as I do —but he hopes there's one good one in the world, and that he may have her for his share."

"His old cook and housekeeper," said Dixzle, "are snappers"

"Snappers? what are they?" asked Lucy.

"Big-headed mud turtles that snap at every thing that comes in their way, and they won't let go till it thundera."

"Why does not my brother-in-law discharge those disagreeable women?" asked Mrs. Winkle.

"It would do no good," said Blore. "The new ones that filled their places, as soon as they found out that he was terrified at the sound of a scolding tongue, would begin to ding at him, and keep on until they got him under their thumbs."

"I always supposed it was his indulgent nature, and not dread or fear, that caused him to tolerate those impudent servants," said Mrs. Winkle.

"You were wrong, then," said Miss Wilsome. "This man is right. I was the only one of the family that could silence the maids. If you had endeavored to rule your husband by a few good tongue lashings, you would have succeeded. But you——"

"I never desired it!" said Mrs. Winkle.

"Your husband was a fortunate man. He used to say so. And Napoleon will never marry unless he can have some guarantee that his wife will not attempt to control his actions. And no woman in her senses would have him unless she knew she could change his abominable habits."

"Beg pardon, madam," said Blore, making a military salute," but the emperor wishes to contract with a wife for the purpose of subjugating the housekeeper and cook, who are always tyrannizing over him. And I am come here without his knowledge, to ask some confidential questions about the woman he intends to marry. I hope she's not one of the Tartars, and that you all can tell me so."

"Who do you mean!" asked the ladies, altogether.

"Miss Grisly Guzzle, or something of that sort."

"Gusset—ma—Gusset! It is true! That is the solution of her extraordinary conduct!" said Lucy. Miss Wilsome's eyes dilated until her face was all eyes and mouth, the latter

nearly as wide open as the former. Mrs. Winkle only leaned back and shook her sides with excessive laughter.

"Yes, miss," continued Blore, "and I do hope and pray she won't turn out to be a savage like my wife, Mrs. Thomas, did." My name is Thomas Blore, but they called me at that time only Mr. Thomas—the Thomases were Jews then, and my lady thought she was getting a fortune. When we were defeated at Waterloo, and Mrs. Thomas fell into the hands of the victors, I dropt the Thomas with my leg and arm, and took up my other name with my wooden limbs to keep from being traced by my wife, if she escaped, which I felt pretty certain she would do. There were a number of Thomases killed, and I hoped she would count me as one of 'em. I've never heard of her since, and pray heaven I may never meet her hereafter."

"The cars go at nine o'clock," said Miss Wilsome, at length finding utterance. "Sister—Lucy—let us pack up and leave this abominable place! You shall live with me, provided you pledge yourselves never to look at, speak to, or have any sort of correspondence with my brother or any member of his family. He is about to disgrace himself irretrievably. And that wile wretch, Gusset——"

"Then we are all to be fried in purgatory!" said poor Blore. "She's a wile wretch, is she? I'll live in my tent at the new barracks we are to have at Boulogne, where the British landed. But our chief will go mad, if his wife forms a triple alliance with the cook and housekeeper."

"There is no probability of that, sergeant," said Mrs. Winkle. "The mistress of the house, and particularly in cases like this, when she is elevated to a position of more importance than any to which she has been previously accustomed, very naturally supposes it her duty to see that no one shares her authority. Miss Gusset is a clear-headed woman, and may, if I am not mistaken in her character, contribute to my brother's happiness, and promote the economy of his establishment. She has never been accustomed to the luxuries of life, and therefore should not be extravagant. Her walk has been an humble one, and hence she should be meek and amiable."

Blore began to dance, with delight, pointing out his wooden leg, and whistling a martial tune, when he was cut short by Miss Wilsome.

"It will be just the reverse of what you suppose, sister," said she. "Your own invariable good nature leads you into error. The hussy would never break out in your presence. Before you, there was always the same mild, smiling, deferential aspect. I have seen more of the world than you have, and I tell you she will be the reverse of what you suppose. She will subdue the servants, and you, too, Blore—and then she will grind my brother's nose to the brain, until he surrenders unconditionally. She will squander his money, set up a fashionable equipage, frown with haughty contempt on her old associates, and seek the company of none but her superiors, who will drink her wines, and laugh at her folly behind her back. No! Republican or not republican, it is a monstrous absurdity to lift either men or women out of their proper sphere."

"Aunt," said Lucy, "you agree with Mr. Lowe. He says the man of a truly tall stature, never gazes upward for congenial faces; but that the one who fancies himself to be above all others, gives evidence that he has been accustomed only to low companions."

"Mr. Lowe will never marry a milliner. But enough I renounce my brother for ever. Let us depart. Bring my bonnet."

"The cars are gone," said Bill Dizzle.

"Is there not an early boat?"

"Yes."

"In it will I go, before these disgraceful nuptials are celebrated. You will go with me, sister and niece?"

"Oh no!" said Mrs. Winkle. "We cannot abandon our home because your brother chooses to marry little Gusset."

"And do you intend to witness the ceremony?"

"Why not? If I could prevent the wedding I would do so, most assuredly, because I think it ill-assorted and unnecessary. But as no intervention of mine would be of any avail, I don't see why we should be offended. Lucy and I will go to the church, and I hope you will send home Walter in time to accompany us—that is, if you are determined to leave us."

"Determined! Talk of the Medes and Persians! I shall turn my back on the whole breed of you. Blore, I wish I could drop a part of my name, as you did, and escape in the

same manner. I am Miss Winkle, and Gusset is to be Mrs. Winkle—the name of my high-bred mother!"

"Pardon, miss," said Blore, "but you might remedy that. You could marry, and I'm sure your new name wouldn't be a low one——"

"What do you mean, sir? No puns! But I'm sure you didn't mean it."

"No, upon my honor—I meant nothing offensive. And I'm truly sorry to hear you declare war against us all. If you would only stay a month or so at the palace, and fight on our side, no doubt we might humble this enemy——"

"No, sir. Before a week is over, the artful wretch will lead my brother about by a ribbon as easily as I did my monkey by his chain. She will make you all slaves! Go, and prepare for the worst."

Blore and Dizzle withdrew, the former in great despondency, and both maintaining a strict silence, until they stood at the gate which led into Lowe's kitchen.

It had been Blore's purpose, and the principal object of his secret mission, in the event of hearing a favorable report of the temper of his lord's spouse, to pay a visit to Lowe's housekeeper, Mrs. Edwards, of whom he had conceived a good opinion in consequence of their congeniality of tastes. He had never seen her; but from the moment Dizzle divulged her fondness for frogs, Blore had formed a favorable estimate of her discernment.

"Come ahead," said Dizzle, opening the gate.

"Perhaps I had better retreat," said Blore, hesitating. "Many a poor fellow under cover of the night, marches upon a masked battery, and is blown to the devil. It is nobler and braver, and safer too, to face the enemy in the broad daylight. But do you think she'll be willing?"

"I don't know any thing about such things," said Bill. "When I told her you would be hunting after her, all I saw was her face turn red as fire, and Mr. Lowe a laughing." Bill did not remember her words, or the broom handle she flourished—for he thought only of the accommodating Patty.

"We'll scale the ramparts," said Blore. "If she should be a vixen, who knows but she may be a match for the chief's mistress, and help to keep the garrison in order? Go in first, Dizzle," he continued, when they arrived in front of the kitchen door, "and reconnoitre. You shall have that honor—an honor

I never yielded to any man before. But bayonets and women's tongues are very different things."

"And so is frog spears," said Bill, lifting the latch and opening the door very cautiously. Seeing the coast clear they both entered, and were made comfortable by the kindly greeting of Patty O'Pan, and who assured the sergeant that Mrs. Edwards was in a very agreeable humor that evening, and had not scolded her since dinner.

The sergeant, then, that his operations might be commenced in due form, sent Patty to her master with his compliments, and asking the favor to be permitted to have a short conversation with his honor, on a matter of importance. The request was immediately granted; and when Blore entered Lowe's library he beheld, for the first time, the object of his solicitation, Mrs. Edwards herself, who was dusting the books and adjusting the window curtains with an unsteady hand. At the name of Blore, she recollected the intimation that had been thrown out by Dizzle; and although there was a recurrence of her resentful emotions, they seemed now to be developed in a less violent form, and so she resolved to face the sergeant's assault, if it should be his purpose to commence any serious matrimonial approaches.

"Sit down, sir; I am glad to see you at my house, sergeant," said Lowe, after witnessing one of Blore's most ceremonious bows.

"Thank you sir—but——"

Here he was interrupted in his speech by Mrs. Edwards, who no sooner heard his voice, than she turned round upon him, opened her mouth, and uttered screams in such quick succession, and with such startling energy, that even her master rose up in utter astonishment, and applied his hand to his ears

Blore sprang from his chair and attempted to make a precipitate retreat, but he was met at the door by Dizzle and Patty, and was prostrated by the collision. He now lay upon his back, his wooden leg pointed upward in an attitude of defence, or as a *cheval de frise* to repulse an apprehended attack.

"What does this mean?" demanded Lowe, when Mrs. Edwards' screams died away, and she sank fainting on a chair

"The she-devil aint dead!" said Blore, rolling his eye fearfully.

"She-devil! Who's a she-devil?" exclaimed Mrs. Edwards, rising quickly, and approaching the prostrate soldier.

"Quarter!" cried he, "I surrender!"

"What does this mean?" again demanded Lowe.

"It means, sir, that that fragment of a 'uman being 'as come to hour 'ouse a courting—and the widow Hedwards his is wife!"

"It's true, your honor. When I was in the army I married an English woman——"

"Henglish is as good as hother folks," said Mrs. Edwards.

"At Waterloo," continued Blore, "I thought all was lost, and she among the rest——"

"You houtrageous——"

"To be certain of it," continued Blore, "I had my own name printed among the dead."

"And that haccounts for your not being Thomas, now," said Mrs. Edwards.

"I see," said Lowe; "and you have unexpectedly found your wife. But, Edwards, why are you not the widow Thomas?"

"Bless your soul, don't you know I married the drummer Edwards in Lord Hilton's regiment, and that he was lost hoverboard on hour way to Hamerica?"

"True. Enough of that. Then as your last marriage was illegal, you remain of course the lawful wife of the sergeant."

"Pardon, sir," said the sergeant. "My name is Thomas Blore, but as they called me Mr. Thomas, and she married me as Mr. Thomas, and was always Mrs. Thomas herself——"

"You think," said Lowe, smiling, "she has no right to be Mrs. Blore?"

"That is the point, sir," said the sergeant.

"It may be decided against you," said Lowe, "if she chooses to claim her own."

"Ave you made hany thing for yourself?" demanded the housekeeper, approaching the sergeant, who had lowered his leg.

"I am second in command of the garrison, and have laid up a thousand dollars. One half shall be yours if you will say nothing——"

"No—I'll 'ave it hall!" said she—"hall that a 'usband howns belongs to the wife. But I won't live with you hif you behave yourself, and hobey me. I don't want to leave my young——"

"I will write the articles of settlement," said Lowe, quickly. "And, truly, sergeant, I think it would be unreasonable in you, having yielded up two limbs and one eye to glory, to claim your wife after so long a separation——"

"Claim the devil!" cried Blore, leaping up. "Pardon, sir,—no offence to you. But I wouldn't be guilty of so unreasonable a thing. I will sign, sir. Sign any thing to be rid of her. Come, Dizzle. Confound these night sallies! Fix it, Mr. Lowe. I'll sign. Only let me get once more under cover of the fort!"

Thus terminated the sergeant's long meditated sortie upon a matrimonial expedition.

"Hif you pleases, sir," said Mrs. Edwards, when the others had departed, "I ham disposed to be hagreeable. Put down the five 'undred."

"I doubt the justice of it, Edwards. Besides you do not need his money. I will provide for you. You have served me faithfully, and I shall have it in my power to reward you. See Dizzle, and Patty, and cause them to be silent on the subject of this discovery."

"I will do hexactly has your honor hadvises," said the old housekeeper, as she hastened away to the kitchen.

CHAPTER IX.

WILSOME RETURNS TO TOWN, AND GIVES THE POET A CHECK—MR. SNOBSON.

Miss Wilsome, true to her inflexible purpose, left Babbleton the next morning by the early boat, and was put down at her mansion at precisely half-past ten o'clock A. M., the hour appointed for the wedding. She had Davy Dibble, the son of the widow's gardener, along with her, carrying the tom cat. Snapper, her coachman, opened the door.

"He's buried, mam," said he, naturally supposing the

death of the monkey had caused the precipitate return of his mistress. "The weather was so hot he wouldn't keep. But they had a nice funeral, and Mr. Parke spoke a yology on his life and character in Latin."

"Mr. Parke? Who is he?" asked his mistress.

"One of Mister Walter's college friends. And the other gentleman has wrote a hepertaff for his headstone—all in Greek."

"What other gentleman?"

"Mr. Pollen, mam, the poet."

"I know him. When was he here?"

"They've been here all the time, mam, a keeping Mr. Walter company."

"Faugh! I thought I smelt tobacco. No doubt they've turned the house upside down. Take the poor fellow into the kitchen and feed him, Davy. Here comes Griddle. Griddle, why are you frowning in that way?"

"You must get another cook, mam, by the end of the month. I give you warning."

"What's the matter? I left you with nothing to do scarcely——"

"Nothing to do, scarcely! To cook five times a day—or two of 'em in the night, and sometimes one of 'em after midnight—called nothing to do! And three hungry wolves always at the table! And one of 'em a Southern slave owner, and always calling colored people niggers—talking about this and that nigger before my face!"

"You don't say these men have been feasting here all the time with Walter, do you?"

"I do, mam; and it's cost you a great deal, I know."

"I don't care what it cost; and that is no business of yours. But if they have spoilt my curtains and furniture with their horrid tobacco," continued Miss Wilsome, pursuing her way to the dining room, "I'll punish them well for it. Come here, Rose. What have you to say against Walter and his associates?"

"Me? Nothing, miss."

"Well—there's one satisfied. Why do you stand staring there, Snapper? Are the horses cured of their rascally capers, yet?"

"Yes, mam, Mr. Walter soon had 'em as gentle as sheep.

But, mam, it's my unpleasant duty to 'nounce to you that one of 'em took sick and deceased yesterday."

"Which one?"

"Punch, mam."

"Why he was the tricksy one! I am only sorry he didn't break his neck a month ago. Look for another. Pah! I smell the tobacco, here, too."

"It's all over the house, mam——" began the cook.

"Rose, was it not your duty to take care of the house?" demanded Miss Wilsome.

"Iss, mam—but Mr. Walter was to give me my orders—and he ordered me to bring a box of cigars. I told him you didn't allow smoking, only out in the portico."

"And what did he say to that?"

"He said you were the mistress of the house when present, and should be obeyed. But as he was then master, he must be obeyed."

"Ha! ha! Good for Walter."

"He had been drinking champagne, mam," said the cook, "which he ordered me to bring up."

"Well?"

"They've drunk a whole dozen, mam."

"Well, what's that to you? Mind your business. Oh, I forgot you intend to leave my service. Go about your business. You know my rule. I never attempt to dissuade any one——"

"If you will let me take back the warning, mam——"

"Well—as you please. But you are not to criticise the language of any guests in my house. If you can read, look at your geography, and you will find that colored people are Negroes, and red people Indians."

The old cook, who had been mortally offended at the roistering young gentlemen, went away grumbling, and was laughed at heartily by Snapper, who enjoyed their company as a relief from the usual dull monotony of his life.

"Where is Walter, now?" asked Miss Wilsome, turning suddenly to Rose.

"They're up stairs, yet, mam."

"What! has Walter's guests been sleeping here, too?"

"Iss, mam."

"And not up yet?"

"No, mam."

"And did they have any tobacco up stairs?"

"I—Iss, mam."

"The villains! But where did they sleep?"

"In the chamber fixed for Mister Walter, and—and——"

"Where else? That wouldn't hold them all."

"In your chamber, too, mam, on the second floor."

"What!" screamed Miss Wilsome, so fiercely that poor Rose sprang back as if she had been stabbed.

"Mister Walter ordered me, mam."

"I know who to blame. And if he had ordered you——"

"Iss, mam."

"Stupid! I—I'll pull his ears! My sheets, my pillow slips——"

"Iss, mam."

"Be silent. No doubt they have ransacked the closets, and turned every thing topsy-turvey! I'll pull every hair out of their heads! I'll—Rose go and tell them I have returned, and desire to see them immediately. What's this? Stop, Rose."

"It's a pack of cards, mam."

"Did they play whist!"

"Iss, mam."

"There are three of them, and we might have a pleasant game together. Tell them to come down. Don't hurry them, by saying I'm angry. Here, take this letter to Walter. If he goes to his mother and uncle, I shall be done with him!" said the old maid, with a terrible frown.

"Good morning, Wilsome. Want a game of whist?" said a voice in the portico, after Rose had gone.

"Pretty Polly!" cried the old lady.

"Wilsome! poor Jocko's dead."

"Alas, poor Jocko!"

"Walter killed Jocko."

"What's that?" cried Miss Wilsome.

"It's true, missus—every word of it," said Griddle, who had been listening, and coming forward now with signs of triumph on her sooty features.

"It aint true, missus, not a word of it!" said Snapper, who had been watching Griddle, and followed her into the presence of their mistress.

"I'll take my bible oath," continued Griddle, "that I saw the young sparks hang your Jocko!"

"I'll tell you, mam," said Snapper, "edzactly how it was." This he did with candor and circumstantiality.

"That's only what the rampaging bloods told him, mam. I saw myself what I told you, mam."

"Griddle!" said Wilsome, with one of her most ferocious looks, "get ready the young gentlemen's breakfasts—and if I hear another word from you, unless it be something in relation to your own department of business, you shall pack up your things and be off before another sun goes down. I don't want to hear any thing from you, either, Snapper."

Snapper followed the cook, but with a triumphant smile on his lip.

"Have they come down?" asked Wilsome, when Rose reappeared.

"Iss, mam—they're in the parlor."

'Tell Walter to come here."

"Iss, mam." Rose returned to the parlor, and Walter soon appeared before his aunt.

"I hope you have enjoyed yourself, Walter," said his aunt, fixing her great eyes upon him.

"Never better in my life, aunt! The only drawback to my happiness was the lamentable end of poor Jocko."

"And the dread of my vengeance. Tell me truly—did he hang himself?"

"No, aunt Neither was he wantonly killed." Walter then related the manner of his death, and he was surprised to see his aunt hear the recital with so much resignation. Of course he was not aware that his friend Lowe had casually expressed his detestation of monkeys in his aunt's hearing, and that his aunt had conceived a partiality for his friend

"That will do. I know the rest. Your companions were respectable, and I commend you for every thing but the tobacco, and the taking possession of my chamber——"

"All the rest were locked, aunt!"

"Bah! Couldn't you break the locks? I locked them to keep the servants out—not the gentlemen. I say I commend your choice of companions—one a student, and the other a poet."

"Poor Pollen, however, when I picked him up, made rather a shabby appearance." Walter described the incident at the pawnbroker's

"What, without a shirt? Ha, ha, ha! Did yours fit

him? I hope he used the bath. Let me see the poem. Biddy bring my portfolio."

"Aunt!" said Walter, seeing the old lady take up a pen, "surely you would not venture to make any alterations——"

"Nonsense, child! Here, give him this. I'll keep the poem. Go, now, and conduct hither your guests. The breakfast is smoking on the table. Say nothing about the wedding, and the disgrace your uncle has brought upon the family, until the young gentlemen have departed. And they need not be in haste if they have any inclination to play. But when they take their leave, you may take yours, and for ever, Walter, unless you agree to cut your uncle's acquaintance."

"My dear aunt, Pollen and Parke have already agreed to go with me to Babbleton this afternoon, and to accompany me to my uncle's chateau. We have been concocting an enormous budget of amusement——"

"If it is for the purpose of annoying Gusset, I shall approve of it. But when your invention is exhausted, remember you are to return to me, and you may bring Mr. Lowe with you. But if you do not cut your uncle, you need not return. Still you must write me an account of your deviltries practised on the milliner. Get Pollen to do it, for I intend to read it for the diversion of my friends."

Walter rejoined his friends in the parlor, and conducted them to the breakfast table, where his aunt presided with gayety and good humor, to their great delight. After the repast, they departed to make preparations for the celebration of the emperor's nuptials.

It was not until they were traversing one of the streets where fire-works were kept for sale, that Walter looked at the paper his aunt had charged him to deliver to Pollen. It was a check for fifty dollars; and it threw the poor poet into a paroxysm of exultation. He would have spent half of it immediately, under the supposition that more could at any time be as easily acquired, had he not been prevented by Walter, who insisted upon his privilege of defraying all the expenses of the meditated celebration.

Soon after that point was determined, the poet fell into one of his fits of abstraction, and began unconsciously to utter words relating to a subject foreign to the matter under consideration. He was dictating proposals for the issue of a new periodical, of which he was to be both the proprietor and

editor. And he alleged in his soliloquy, that inasmuch as the critics, who had never ceased to do him gross injustice, were actuated by unworthy motives, being authors themselves, it would be his privilege and pleasure to retaliate upon them by an exposure of their ignorance and malevolent motives. At the same time it would be his delight and duty to contribute to the development of true genius wherever he might discover it, instead of repulsing meritorious young aspirants by gratuitous sneers or disheartening them by cruel neglect. In a word, the injustice he had suffered, would teach him to be just.

"Let him go," said young Parke, when he saw the poet, unmindful of his company, turn into an alley, principally occupied by printers, and proceed on his way muttering to himself, and gesticulating energetically.

"Yes—let him go," said Walter, looking after him. "He would not enjoy the sport. But who is that over there bowing to you?"

"It's Snobson. Don't you know him? he's coming towards us. He staid only two years at college, and left without graduating. And yet his father is a rich banker. Shall I introduce him?"

"Yes. Perhaps he'll go up with us. Is there any fun in him?"

"Full to the brim—and as simple as a loon. He runs after every girl that strikes his fancy, and thinks himself such an irresistible Adonis, that no one is capable of withstanding him."

At that moment Snobson came up and was introduced to Walter, who was amused at the scarcely perceptible mustaches which were industriously stroked by Snobson, his ponderous chain, his enormous ring, and his polished tight-fitting shoes. He saw, likewise, at a single glance, that the face of his new acquaintance was marred by incurable pimples, and that his hair was fiery red.

"Snobson," said Parke, "how would you like to go with us to a wedding feast in the country?"

"How far off?"

"Near Babbleton."

"Babbleton! Good! I'm in. I go there every day. I've made a great discovery up there. The most beautiful creature in the world lives in Babbleton. I haven't found out her name yet; I followed her into a certain street, but don't

yet know the house in which she lives. I saw her on the boat one day, and since then I have never missed a trip. I've made a bet that she shall be my captive in a month.'

"What is she like?" asked Walter.

He described her. She was evidently Walter's own sister Lucy! But he manifested no surprise, promising himself some amusement at their meeting.

CHAPTER X.

A GRAND PARTY AT MR. WINKLE'S CHATEAU.

During the passage to Babbleton, Mr. Tom Snobson entertained Winkle and Parke with narrations of his innumerable adventures with the belles at the different watering-places, all of which he had visited within the last six weeks. His career had been an unbroken triumph. He had been cordially welcomed by the keepers of the hotels, and had received only smiles from the ladies. His father was excessively rich, and every body knew it. But of all the young ladies it had ever been his good fortune to admire, the unknown beauty whom he had traced to Babbleton seemed to have made the deepest impression on his susceptible heart. He declared upon his honor, that he dreamt of her incessantly, and really felt that he might be capable of loving her dearly, and only her—provided she came of a good family. He did not deem it necessary to reflect that his own father had served an apprenticeship in a counting-room, since he was now a universally acknowledged aristocrat.

George Parke's curiosity became excited to behold the paragon of Babbleton, whose charms Snobson delighted so much to portray; and Walter, assuming a dubious gravity, as if not quite sure he had ever seen the unparalleled creature, and knowing perfectly well that Parke had never met with Lucy, meditated only the means of realizing the greatest possible amount of sport from the discovery. He assured them, therefore, that if it had not been his good fortune hitherto, to know so lovely an inhabitant of the village, there would be no diffi-

culty in procuring an introduction, and then his friends and especially the enamored Snobson, should enjoy the delight of an immediate presentation.

Arrived at the village inn, Walter contrived under some pretence or other to separate himself for a short time from his companions, and hastened to his mother's house to learn the exact condition of affairs. From the manner in which his aunt had spoken in condemnation of the alliance, it might be a matter of doubt whether his mother and sister, or either of them, had accompanied the bride to his uncle's mansion after the celebration of the nuptials at the altar. Lucy's letter had informed him of her intention to witness the ceremony; but nothing further in regard to her subsequent purposes.

Walter's mother, however, related every thing that had transpired. The church had been thronged by spectators, whom Gusset had invited thither to witness her triumph. And it appeared that such a consummation of her ambitious projects had not been unforeseen; for she was decked in the usual habiliments of matrimony, and seemed to attract the admiration of many of her neighbors, who had not been accustomed to regard the retired milliner as worthy of any special attention. But Mrs. Winkle declared that the bride appreciated the importance of her position. She was not embarrassed. There were no symptoms of delicate timidity in her carriage or speech. On the contrary, the expressions of her countenance were rather indicative of imperious feeling, and a proud consciousness of the elevated station she was henceforth to assume, as the spouse of the wealthiest man in the country. On the other hand, her lord manifested indications of awe and terror in the novelty of his situation. As if he had utterly surrendered his independence in becoming a wedded man, he yielded an unhesitating obedience to whatever was signified as her will. He seemed, indeed, to have no will of his own, but to obey. And she, that her sway might not be diminished for the want of exercise, taxed her ingenuity to devise demands, that her power might be exhibited to the public.

Although the groom, attended by his neighbors, had arrived on horseback, the bride was not satisfied to accompany her lord to his home in the same unostentatious manner. The old heavy coach had to be sent for. It was drawn by four horses, and driven by a servant in livery. She mount-

d the steps with the air of a princess, amidst the gazes of admiring friends, and the envy of many ancient maidens who witnessed with dismay her sudden exaltation. The equipage halted at the widow's door, and Lucy was required to occupy a seat beside her "new-made aunt," as the lady herself expressed it within the hearing of the widow. That was the substance of the information Walter obtained from his mother. But he learned a very large party would be assembled at the chateau that evening, and thither he lost no time in conducting his companions.

They proceeded on foot, as the distance was not great, and arrived in front of the mansion just after the hall had been illuminated.

"Now, boys," said Walter, "from what I could learn in the village, the beauty we are in quest of must be among my uncle's—no, my aunt's—guests. But since it seems probable that I would have known the lady, and doubtless have been captivated by her irresistible charms, if there were not some impediment in the way, I think we should proceed with circumspection, until certain suspicions which have arisen in my mind are dispelled. She may be, possibly, the daughter of an honest shoemaker—"

"No!" cried Snobson, "that would be a d——l of a joke! and I almost in love with her!"

"Or," continued Walter, "some milliner's apprentice; and, as my 'new-made aunt,' was once a milliner herself—"

"That is the reason she was invited," said Parke. "But if she is as beautiful as Tom says, I want a chat with her, no matter who she is."

"Of course," responded Walter. "But then, let me urge you not to cast too many curious looks at her if she chances to appear before us unexpectedly, and should equal or surpass Tom's description. And above all, do not for the world ask any one who she is, or what is her name. It might cause you to be sneered at by some of the *ton*. Leave every thing to me I will find a proper time and opportunity to introduce you."

They entered the hall just when the last word was uttered; and Walter, under the pretext of seeking information where his uncle and aunt were to be found, left his companions for a few moments to themselves, promising to return immediately

and conduct them into the presence of the lord and lady of the palace.

When Walter passed out of the great hall, the first person he met was Lucy, who, in high spirits threw her arms round his neck before he had recognized her.

"O ho," cried he, "suppose it had been Snobson or Parke."

"Who are they?" demanded Lucy.

Walter told her, and she instantly promised to co-operate with him in his innocent project for their mutual diversion. It was arranged that they should all sit on the same side of the table at dinner, so that Lucy's identification by Snobson might be delayed. She might, in the meantime, however, for the especial gratification of her own curiosity, and for the purpose of knowing the gentleman, once flit across their vision as they stood in the hall, and while Walter sought his uncle and aunt in the next room, and obtained permission to present his friends.

This was speedily accomplished; and when Walter re-entered the hall to conduct the young gentlemen into the presence of the married couple, he found them transported with the lingering effects of the bright vision which had been vouchsafed them. "Was she the beauty you saw on the boat and followed into —— street?" asked Walter.

"Yes," cried Snobson, "only more angelic than ever. I hope she is no mechanic's daughter, no milliner's apprentice. I care not how poor she may be—my father is rich enough—I will marry her. George, recollect, I am in love, honorably in love! And you, Winkle, I warn you to keep your eyes off—she was discovered by me, and should be mine."

"Warning me against gazing at one whom I don't know! You need not fear. All I apprehend is that she will turn out one of the nobodies you despise so much. But, come; it is the hour for dinner, and you must be presented."

Walter led them into the presence of the host and hostess, where they were very cordially received.

"Taken at last, uncle? I hope you will be happy in your captivity," said Walter.

"Not taken, sir—no capitulation, sir—but a convention—an alliance—with secret stipulations. In the domestic department my ally will rule, whilst I direct the military and diplomatic affairs."

"I forget, Mr. Winkle," said his imperious spouse—for she seemed to become more haughty at every new development of her newly acquired power and importance—"whether or not the secret stipulations were to be divulged by either of us."

"Oh, I beg pardon, my dear Gusset."

"Recollect!" cried she, in his ear, "you were never to mention that name again."

"True—true. You must not hesitate to remind me of any neglect of duties, Mrs. Winkle, or infraction of the treaty. But as for secret stipulations——"

Here dinner was announced, and the emperor's speech was cut short. He conducted his spouse in advance of the company, and a chair was reserved near them at the table for Lucy, who, in pursuance of the plan agreed upon, remained in concealment until all the guests were seated.

.But that his companions might not be idle, Walter introduced them to a great many of his acquaintances, and among the rest, to the sisters Bell and Blanche Arum, rich and fashionable daughters of a retired patent pill manufacturer, which was quite a different personage from the manufacturer of shoes; to the sisters Susan and Sally Crudle, whose father was still more wealthy than the haughty Arum: but then he made his fortune by the manufacture of beer. Arum had long since sunk the shop, while Crudle could not be prevailed on to relinquish his business. Therefore his name was still over the door of the shop in the city; and while it remained there, Mrs. C. opposed every attempt of her daughters to prevail on their coachman to wear a broad band on his hat and extra bright buttons on his coat. Crudle listened very patiently to every argument advanced, both by his wife and daughters, in favor of an entire relinquishment of business: the demonstrations of a sufficiency of wealth to produce an ample income at simple interest; the delights of leisure: the advantages of dignified retirement, and the better opportunity of effecting advantageous alliances, etc. To all such protestations and pleadings, Mr. Crudle would reply, by casting a check for $1000 into the midst of his family, for the purchase of new articles of furniture, jewels, etc, and alleging that quadruple that amount had been realized from his business since the last discussion of the subject, and that if he had taken their advice, he would have been a poorer man by so many thousands.

Lucy had glided into the saloon, and quietly taken posses-

sion of the chair which had been reserved for her; the clatter of knives and forks having overwhelmed all other sounds. The young gentlemen had sipped their wine with the bride, with their eyes glancing from the Arums to the Crudles, who sent back flashes of equal intensity; and all the time Lucy sat demurely at the side of her protuberant uncle, slyly exchanging signals with her brother, who was nearly opposite his companions, and occasionally obtaining a stealthy view of Snobson and Parke who were incessantly addressed by the Crudles and Arums across the table.

Nor was it long before the enterprising daughters of the rich men learned that Tom Snobson was the son of the great banker Snobson, whose *position* in society was fixed, and whose name had been in the newspapers. Nor was it less interesting to ascertain—which they did—that young Parke was a student at Princeton College, destined to the legal profession, and a scion of one of the great southern families, who possessed their hundreds of slaves. True, slavery in the abstract was condemned—but in the hymenial concrete, it might not be an irreconcilable evil. Hence, a battery was unmasked against both young gentlemen, from the flashing eyes of the daughters of the pill and beer nabobs.

Far away at the opposite end of the table sat Ralph Roland, never gazing towards Lucy but between his fingers, and unperceived by her. Edmund Lowe, pale, thoughtful and abstemious, was not so far removed, nor so careful in concealing the direction of his eyes, which wandered over the whole assembly, and dwelt the longest upon the fair brow and perfect form of Lucy. He sat beside old John Dowly—the melancholy discarded lover of Lucy's mother.

After the last course had disappeared, Roland arose with a foaming goblet and proposed the health of the bride, which was loudly cheered and heartily responded to by all but Lucy, who was glancing slyly at Walter's excited friends, whose heads were dodging under the artillery of Blanche and Bell, and Susan and Sally.

"Be attentive, Lucy!" said her aunt. "Did you not hear what Mr. Roland said?"

"I beg pardon, Gusset," replied Lucy, quickly, resuming her former attitude, but not before Snobson had perceived her.

"Miss Winkle!" said Griselda, "I beg that you will

hereafter forget that I was ever called Gusset. That name has been extinguished, and I shall expect none but my enemies to make use of it hereafter."

"She is now my spouse, and your aunt, Lucy," said Mr. Winkle.

"I forgot, uncle."

"I know it. Of course you could never be the enemy of my wife—although she says some of my family will never treat her with respect."

Lucy was silent, while her aunt looked steadily at her.

Then Colonel Oakdale proposed three cheers for Napoleon Winkle; and amidst the rapturous applause—for the colonel, being a widower himself, and the junior of the bridegroom, had intimated his purpose of following Napoleon's example—there was heard a startling crash about midway down the table, which was followed by slight shrieks from the Arums and Crudles. It had been occasioned by the fall of Snobson, who, in leaning back to obtain another view of the glorious eyes of Lucy that had been momentarily fixed upon him, lost his equilibrium, and fell over on his back.

This incident was followed by uncontrollable laughter, on the part of Walter, who understood the cause of it, and which was signalled by him to Lucy, whose ill suppressed convulsions gave her aunt serious vexation, and subjected herself to several terse lectures upon the subject of propriety.

The scene had not escaped the notice of Roland, whose brows were contracted fiercely, as he endeavored in vain to catch the eye of the offending young gentleman. The glance he launched at Lucy, was repulsed with something like disdain, certainly with indifference.

Without form or ceremony,—for Napoleon had most unaccountably abandoned the helm of command, and his spouse had never before mingled with, much less been a principal actor in so large an assembly of gay people, the company arose and proceeded to the parlors in promiscuous groups, with no regard to precedence, and much to the chagrin of the Arums, who vented their spleen openly. But it afforded delight to the Crudles, who appreciated the utmost freedom of social enjoyment.

Walter lingered in the hall to intercept his companions, where, upon meeting him, they contrived to escape from their belles.

"It was her eyes!" said Snobson, trembling with real perturbation. "They drew me over. The chair-back was broken off, and that made the crash. It was magnetism. She attracted me. You could see her, Winkle, from where you sat. Who is she?"

"There were several of the milliner's old acquaintances in that neighborhood. Don't be a fool, and fall in love with a girl beneath you. You shall be introduced to the one you admire so much. But be calm. Cool yourself in the air She'll turn out a nobody I'm afraid."

"If she is the one I saw flit across the hall," said Parke, "you may rely upon it Tom has reason for his madness. Milliner's apprentice or not, she has the most fascinating features and carriage of any girl in the company, if not in the universe."

"You, too! I'm sorry I brought you here. Your parents will never forgive me. In love with some poor obscure village girl, whose fingers may be pricked into nutmeg graters by the point of her needle! You had the aristocracy by you. The Arums and the Crudles."

"We learned they were rich in a few minutes," said Parke; "for they spoke unconsciously of their fathers' houses and lots, horses and carriages, and their fine dresses and jewelry—and the sums that had been paid for them. We learned every thing but the manner in which their fortunes had been made."

"And they were *au fait* as to the standing and means of my family—and of yours, Winkle," he added, rather gravely.

"But not of mine," said Parke. "They could not find out how many acres and woolly heads I had. Yet they seemed disposed to take me on trust. And perhaps one of them, the younger Crudle—Sally, I believe—may have a chance for me. My income they tell me is to be small, whenever the cotton crop fails. A mile square in Georgia, don't produce as much revenue as a lot in the city of twenty-five feet front. I shall not lose sight of the Crudles, for they are capable of refinement, and our people in the South won't be too inquisitive if I bring home an heiress."

When the young gentlemen entered the parlors, the first object that attracted the attention of Snobson, was Lucy. She sat in an alcove of a window, conversing with Lowe. Old Mr. Dowly was seated apart, with his large lustrous eyes

fixed upon the interesting pair. Roland was talking to Miss Bell Arum, while Blanche was looking over the music at the piano. The Crudles, contriving to be disengaged, seemed to be awaiting the approach of our party of young gallants. At the extreme end of the long apartment, on a luxuriously cushioned sofa, were seated Mr. and Mrs. Winkle, receiving the felicitations of their acquaintance.

"There she is!" whispered Snobson. "Is she not an angel?"

"She surpasses all the beauties I ever beheld," said Parke.

"Oh, that lady in the recess, conversing with Mr. Lowe?" responded Walter.

"Yes!" said Parke, with animation. "But if the fellow's name be Lowe, he does not seem to be a low fellow. I noticed him at the table, and I think I never beheld a gentleman of better polish or more refined manners. He has a fine countenance, and the young lady must be of high breeding. Walter, none of your humbug! I suspect she is one of your favorites. You seem to have them every where. I shall know what to say to Miss Virginia, when I return to the city."

"You are mistaken, George; upon my honor you are, if you suppose I have matrimonial designs upon that creature. I know her well. You shall be introduced. Come along."

"But who is she? her name?" demanded the young men.

"Oh, Miss what-do-you-call-her! Come!" he continued, leading them towards the alcove, seeing Lowe withdraw with a smile on his beautiful pale lip, and convinced that Lucy had revealed to him the mischievous plot.

"But if she should not be a proper acquaintance for me to make in such a public place?" said Snobson, hesitatingly.

"Oh, come along. She is quite genteel enough. Sister Lucy," he continued, with gravity, "let me introduce my friends, Mr. Snobson, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Parke, of Georgia."

Lucy bowed very kindly, while the young gentlemen blundered in their salutations, and knew not what to say. They looked at each other, at Walter, at Miss Winkle, blushed and trembled. They might have felt and acted differently, if it had occurred to them that Walter had deliberately meditated so embarrassing a surprise for them.

"I think I have enjoyed the pleasure of seeing Mr. Snobson before," said Lucy; "and I do not remember where.

And yet I am sure it has not been very long since. Oh! did I not see you on the boat the other day?"

Snobson was under the necessity of confessing that he was on the boat the day alluded to, for had he not told Walter that he followed the charming creature through several streets? But the poor fellow was so nearly stricken dumb that he could only utter monosyllables.

"And I have often heard my brother speak with enthusiasm of his friend from Georgia. Perhaps Mr. Parke may have detected Walter in some insidious praise of his poor sister?"

"No—hang me if ever he did!" said Walter.

"True," said Parke, recovering his accustomed composure, "but I wonder he did not. I am sure I would have lauded one of mine to him if he had dwelt so near her, provided she had been so—I mean fair, and accomplished."

"That would have been a different matter altogether," said Walter. "And no doubt I should have mentioned Lucy, if—don't frown, sister!"

"Go, sir. I dismiss you," said Lucy, affecting a look of displeasure.

"I will, good sister," said Walter; "for I see Sergeant Blore beckoning me through the window. But, Lucy, where are the guards? I see no bayonets."

"Our aunt has ordered them not to appear to-night."

"She is to be general, then? We'll see. Don't be alarmed at any thing you hear to-night, Lucy." Saying this, Walter withdrew. He was followed by Snobson, and overtaken on the terrace.

"Mr. Winkle," said Snobson, "I want to make you an humble apology; and I hope you won't be offended afterwards. I do beg your pardon. I didn't know it was your sister I was talking about, and was following in the street. I am willing to make any reparation in my power——"

"Reparation?"

"Upon my honor I will! I am sure, if father could once see her——"

"You would marry her, if he gave his consent?"

"Upon my word and honor I would! And you may say so to her, if you choose——"

"Oh, my dear fellow, you must say such things to her yourself. And as for apologizing for what you did the other

day, I beg you won't think of it. It is gratifying to any girl to be admired and followed. You have no idea what fine spirits my sister enjoyed when she observed it."

"Did she see me?"

"Yes—and she boasted of it. The girls are as fond of making conquests as ever Alexander was."

"And she knew it! I feel like a detected sheep-killing dog! What shall I do?"

"Why, tell her she carried your heart by storm; that the attraction was too powerful to be resisted; and hence you could not avoid following her. She will be flattered, I assure you."

"I shall never have the boldness to speak to her in that way. But you will not be offended, I hope?"

"Nonsense, Tom. I would do the same if I were like you, no doubt. But excuse me, now; I have an appointment out here under the chestnut tree."

Snobson returned to the gay company within, while Walter joined the sergeant, with whom he found Bill Dizzle, and both were anxiously awaiting him.

The new mistress of the establishment had truly exerted her power over her lord, and obtained an order that there should be no military display in the vicinity of the mansion. But the retainers of the house had permission to get drunk at the barracks, called the camp of Bologne, near the scene of the late invasion of John Bull, and to send up a few noiseless rockets in honor of the merry occasion. The subject of the conference under the chestnut tree on the lawn, may be developed in the progress of this history. Suffice it to say, that the sergeant was much chagrined at the conduct of his general's spouse; and was conscious of well founded apprehensions, that she was not only capable of subduing all the other females about the house, but would not be likely to pause in the career of ambition, until she had obtained the supreme command of the entire establishment. At all events he was quite as impatient as Walter could be, to ascertain by some well-conceived experiments the extent of her influence over her lord.

CHAPTER XI

THE BRIDAL NIGHT CONTINUED, AND WHAT TOOK PLACE ON THE TOP OF THE HOUSE.

As there are more vicissitudes in American society than in any other under the sun, it follows that our people are the most observant and calculating of the dwellers upon this mundane sphere. Therefore, as soon as the revellers were re-assembled in the commodious parlors of the Winkle mansion, and those who fancied that sort of exercise, were tripping on the "light fantastic toe," the other portion of the assembly, that preferred the exercise of the tongue, were every where discussing the consequences of the wedding.

"I am sorry for the widow, and it's a pity for Walter and Lucy," said Mrs. Arum, as she admired a heavy jewel, resembling a fantastic breastplate, on the bosom of her daughter Bell.

"It's tremendous lamentable," responded Mrs. Crudle, smiling at her daughter Susan, then whirling in the dance with Mr. Roland, "to think that they held their heads so high! Now, Mr. Roland says, they are beggars!"

"Beggars, Mrs. Crudle! surely they'll not be so bad off as that!"

"That's what he said—but I wouldn't have it mentioned for the world as coming through me. He says Miss Wilsome went off in a huff to the city, swearing vengeance against all the family that countenanced the hypocritical Gusset, and declaring she would have nothing further to do with any of 'em who went to the wedding, or attended the revels out here to-night."

"And Wilsome is wilful enough to keep her word. Lucy and Walter were looked upon as her heirs."

"She'll marry now, if it's to a butcher; that is, if he can learn to play whist. It's in the breed. You see what her hallucinated brother has done. I'm sure a fair faced well-formed butcher is as good as the scrawny sallow-complexioned milliner."

"You are right, Mrs. Crudle. And as we were just say-

ing, our haughty neighbors, the Winkles of Babbleton, must lower their feathers at least, for the humble demure Gusset that was, and that used to knuckle to and almost worship them, as sure as she lives, will be revenged. She will tower above them now. I know the nature of these soft-spoken meek old maids when they get the upper hand! They'll quarrel the first week. I know it. And the proud widow would die rather than demean herself before her old dependant."

"Yes, indeed, Mrs. Arum! And she will be willing to associate oftener with other people who are worth a thousand times as much as herself—and in place of smiling risively when pertinent people must be telling how our husbands made their fortunes, she'll be sending the silly Biddy to us for the loan of a gill of cream, or a basket of coals. Oh, we'll mortify 'em! Let's make our coachmen drive by her house six times every fine day; and tell the girls to promenade before her doors in their richest and newest dresses. It's a duty to humble any one's pride, who hasn't got money to support it."

"Bell! come dance with me!" cried Walter, abruptly appearing before the daughter, who was listening in silence. The matrons stared; but before they could recover their presence of mind to deprecate what would have been deemed by either of them two days before a great honor, Bell had eagerly and precipitately accepted the invitation.

"Did you ever see such cool impudence!" said Mrs. Crudle. "But Bell bounced up like a hare from under a cabbage leaf. She's been used to thinking it a great honor to be noticed by a Winkle."

"I'll learn her better. But, then, Walter isn't to blame. Nor Lucy, either. If they behave themselves, and never put on airs, we needn't shut our doors in their faces. Poor Lucy! yonder she sits alone, no doubt thinking on her destitute situation. I wonder Roland, who has been whirling with Susan, don't ask her to dance. And the mysterious stranger, who will not even speak to any other girl, is stalking backwards and forwards in the hall."

"Yes, I saw him there. His arms were folded, and he was in a deep distraction."

"Abstraction, Mrs. Crudle."

"It's all one. Both of my girls have got fine partners. Snobson's family, you know, are invited to Madame R——'s"

reception; and as for the southern student, they all belong to the very first families. They don't need certifications of character."

Poor Lucy! She seemed truly to be deserted by her accustomed worshippers. She sat alone in the recess, gazing mournfully at the merry scene. She had overheard more than one of her own sex speculating upon the results of her uncle's marriage, and the indignant abandonment of her aunt; and she could easily perceive, by the glances of triumph among those who had often envied her, that her reverse of fortune was to be for them a matter of exultation, rather than one of sympathy. She was neglected by her new aunt, and forgotten by her uncle. Her brother's young friends were flirting with the Arums and the Crudles. Lowe, with folded arms, was immersed in one of his reveries, finding a solitude in a crowd. And as if to confirm her melancholy, she had been again annoyed by the importunity of Roland, who, after keeping aloof for several hours, had seized an opportunity to repeat his declaration, and to urge his suit by all the inducements which the desire of possessing fortune might naturally suggest. He did not venture to depict directly the destitute condition of Lucy, but he knew it would be sufficiently apparent to one of her vivid imagination, when contrasted with the vast possessions which he offered to share with her. And to add to her vexation, she beheld the eyes of Lowe at last riveted upon her when Roland was urgently pressing his suit! She was immovable, and her persecutor, without extorting a peremptory refusal, departed sullenly, and was soon laughing very heartily with Blanche Arum.

An intermission occurred, during which the band of musicians withdrew to partake of their accustomed and indispensable stimulants. It was then proposed by the artful mothers of the Arum and Crudle belles, that there should be music at the piano, and above the noise and confusion of conversation and laughter, the ringing voices of the actresses penetrated the ears of all. And at the end of every performance there was a loud clapping of hands, followed by a simultaneous volley of compliments.

It was during one of the pauses which succeeded the storms of plaudits, that the loud and hearty voice of Col. Oakdale was heard calling for Lucy.

"Where is she? where is she?" he asked, making his way

through the company. "I must hear her voice, or I shall never be able to sleep again. Come forth, I say, Lucy Winkle! Oh, there you are! My dear, sweet girl," he continued, advancing to the alcove which Lucy had never quitted, and where Lowe was now sitting beside her, "do have mercy on my poor old widowed ears, and regale them with one of the songs of other days, such as you and my Virginia know so well how to sing. Come Lowe, bring her along." The colonel opened a passage, and Lucy suffered Lowe to conduct her to the piano. She sat down before the instrument, without seeming to be conscious of the multitude of glances directed towards her. She was calm and pensive. Turning over the leaves, she selected a song congenial to her feelings. The words had been written by one of the great poets of a preceding generation, and expressed the tumultuous emotions and affection of an innocent heart wounded by one who had been the victim of a wicked deception. So electric is deep human feeling, that every one coming in contact with it partakes of its nature and influence. The first notes of the instrument under the gentle touch of her rosy fingers, imparted a thrill of softened sadness to every person that heard them. And when the sound of her exquisitely modulated voice succeeded, conveying the full inspiration of the poet, by the proper emphasis, the expression, the gestures—the spell of enchantment was complete, and not the slightest whisper could be heard in that vast assembly. And when the last word was uttered by the fair songstress, and her ivory arm reclined motionless on the keys, and her bosom rose and fell like the billows of the ocean after the cessation of a storm, a protracted silence ensued.

The colonel stood on one side with folded arms, his chin sunk upon his breast. Lowe, pale, listless, and immobile as a statue, was on the other. The first movement was made by Walter, who stepped forward, and encircling the neck of his sister, bestowed a kiss upon her snowy forehead.

"I will do that too!" exclaimed the bridegroom, rising spasmodically from the sofa where his spouse had hitherto confined him. "She is of my own flesh and blood, and I am proud of her." But before he could execute his purpose, he was overtaken by his wife, who whispered a few magical words in his ear which induced him to resume his seat.

Lowe conducted Lucy back to the dim recess she coveted,

and then strode out upon the lawn in the moonlight, while the sad girl, reclining her chin upon her hand, gazed after him through the glass door that opened upon the terrace. But she had not long maintained that pensive attitude, before she was startled by the presence of one, who had never hitherto ventured to address her except in answer to some interrogatory relating to his duties behind the counter. This was Mr. Blotter, the clerk of Fibber, a shopkeeper in the village.

"Don't be down-hearted, miss," said he, "for every body who *has* a heart, can't help feeling for you."

"Feeling for me, sir?" exclaimed Lucy, in utter astonishment.

"Yes, miss. Every body is saying that your mother will be poor, now; and Mr. Fibber, my employer, who trusted Miss Gusset on your mother's recommendation, has ordered me not to run up a long account this year with the widow——"

"I don't understand this, sir. Pray excuse me," said Lucy.

"It means that Mr. Fibber is no gentleman, and next year, when my time is up with him, and I get my little money from my guardian, I mean to tell him so, if you will give me liberty."

"What do you desire of me?" asked Lucy turning her eyes full upon the young man.

"All I want to say is your singing made the tears come into my eyes, and I feel as if I could die to do you any good. And if all the world deserts you, Miss Lucy, remember that I, Dick Blotter, am your friend till death. I would marry you in a minute!"

Before Lucy could utter a word in response to such an unlooked-for declaration, the shopkeeper's clerk had vanished. She buried her face in her handkerchief, and her whole frame was seized with convulsive agitations. Lowe, who witnessed the scene from his position without, had returned, and was now standing beside her.

"Lucy," said he, "who has offended you?"

"Offended me?" she asked, raising her face, bedewed with tears, and exhibiting the traces—not of displeasure—but of excessive laughter!

"I see I was mistaken," said Lowe, turning away, as if to retire.

"Hear what it was," said Lucy. She then recapitulated

what had been communicated by poor Blotter, and Lowe could not repress the smile which struggled to relax his features.

"But, Lucy," said he, sighing, and occupying a seat at her side, which served to shield her from the prying glances of the flitting company, "the things which poor Blotter has revealed to you are freely discussed by the guests of your new aunt. One cannot avoid hearing them, let him turn whithersoever he will."

"I am aware of it," said Lucy.

"Then why not escape such annoyances?"

"How can I escape them? But they shall not annoy me."

"How? I have told you. Promise——"

"Edmund—I can promise no more! I have, perhaps, already pledged too much. You have every information that can be desired in regard to my family—to my condition and prospects. Then why do you withhold from my mother the communication which you say must prove satisfactory? I will make no further confession. I am pledged never to be involved in any irrevocable entanglement of the heart without her concurrence. My word to her shall be held inviolably sacred. Proceed no farther—cease to refer to the subject—unless you are prepared to satisfy my mother."

"Do you doubt, Lucy?"

"I do not! Let that suffice. Urge me no further. My duty must be performed—shall be performed—even if I survive it not."

"Lucy! I love you beyond all human power of expression! and I never loved another! But why repeat what I have so often declared already. Would to heaven I were richer. But I have a sufficient income for happiness in a village——"

"Pray do not speak thus, Mr. Lowe. Your thoughts seem to be uttered unconsciously, and you may be heard by others."

"True. Forgive me. My life of solitude has engendered the habit. But, believe me, Lucy, whatever others may suppose, I have no thoughts which might not be uttered within the hearing of any one as gentle and pure in heart as yourself."

At this juncture Bill Dizzle, decked in his Sunday clothes, glided through one of the long folding glass doors that opened on the terrace, and made his way expeditiously to the

sofa on which the lord of the establishment was sitting. He placed a short despatch in his hand, and then stood apart as if awaiting his orders.

"To arms! To arms!" shouted the aroused Napoleon. "We are invaded! The enemy are upon us! Let the drums beat—mount horses—sound the bugle, and away!"

"Stop! Bill Dizzle!" cried the now imperious Mrs. Napoleon Winkle, seizing the messenger with one hand, and snatching the despatch away from her lord with the other. "Don't be frightened, my friends," continued she; "it is a false alarm, and intended as a joke. I'll read the intelligence. '*The red boar has thrown down the palings and led the whole drove into the garden.*' Bill," said she, amidst the shouts of laughter that ensued, "whistle up the dogs and drive the pigs out of the garden."

Napoleon sank back subdued on the sofa.

"You know, Mr. Winkle," said his spouse, perceiving his humiliation, "it was stipulated that I should direct the little domestic matters which occur about the house. If you had been in the field, this affair would have fallen under your jurisdiction."

"Oh, madam, if it be really a false alarm, every one will be indebted to you for so prompt and complete a suppression of it; and I shall have cause to congratulate myself on finding in my spouse so valuable an auxiliary. No doubt when I am called to the distant north, you will make an efficient regent."

"Yes. I'll undertake to govern in your absence. But, you know, it is all a joke. The silly people pretend to say that you really believe the bulls are the British, the hogs the Russians, and yourself the great Corsican chieftain. It is not so—is it? Tell me it was all for your amusement! Tell me so on this, your wedding night!"

"Of course, my dear. I never supposed such things to be really as I called them, or as they may have been represented by others. But every one has some hobby or other, and I have mine. I sometimes become excited to such a degree that, no doubt, I am capable of imagining any thing. And that is my foible, which I should be sorry to have destroyed. In childhood our toy horses, and men and beasts, are real flesh and blood in our estimation. In age, we are only children of a larger growth, and as long as our infatuations do not injure others, I think they might be regarded as allowable

and justifiable. One of the good effects, my dear, of the hallucination attributed to me, was the accidental discovery of one I deemed capable of sympathy and disposed to defend my innocent motives whenever they might be assailed. I need not name her."

"I *will* defend you—you may rely upon it," said his spouse, with some misgivings as to the extent she might proceed with safety in taking possession of the reins. It flashed upon her understanding, that in the event of a rupture, she might possibly be expelled from her magnificent home, and therefore it might be prudent to infuse a particle more of conciliation in her preliminary measures. There were many methods of reducing husbands to subjection: but if all of them should fail, there could be no foe sufficiently potential to take from her the respectable name of Winkle, and of conferring the odious one of Gusset upon her again.

The meditations of the aspiring bride were put to flight by a sudden flash, more vivid than the light of the wax candles, and which was succeeded by a tremendous explosion of artillery. A great many slight screams were heard—the dancers paused in mid career, and the musicians let fall their instruments. The bride sprang up, pale, and quivering with vexation.

"Oh, Mr. Winkle!" said she, "you promised there should be none of this."

"I did, indeed, my dear—and I am one who keeps his word. I must know the meaning of it. Blore shall be called to an account. Unless he can show that it is one of the anniversaries we have been in the habit of——"

"Oh, if you can excuse him on such a pretext as that, he will not be punished; for I have heard it said that Bonaparte fought bloody battles on every day of the summer months."

"And if he fought, of course he won," replied Napoleon Winkle.

Bill Dixie glided in and placed another despatch in the hand of Napoleon.

"Dixie," said Mrs. Winkle reproachfully, "I told you to bring no more papers here to-night."

"How can I help it, mam? They'd shoot me if I didn't obey orders."

"It was a mistake," said Mr. Winkle. "Sergeant Blore,

you know, has only one eye, and he says the calendar was blotted. He begs pardon. It is granted. The great battle was not fought on this day—neither did it result in such a manner as to call for commemoration. Yet I forgive him."

"What great battle?" asked several.

"Waterloo! And the sergeant must have been indulging excessively in strong potations, to forget how that struggle terminated, since he lost two of his limbs and an eye on the occasion. But he writes me the cause of the apparent loudness of the report was the pointing of the guns in this direction."

"Are they aiming the cannons at us?" asked Mrs. Cradle, in great alarm.

"There were no balls in them, madam. They fire blank cartridges on such occasions."

"Walter," said Mrs. Winkle, "won't you oblige me by requesting the sergeant to commit no more such mistakes to-night?"

"With pleasure," responded the young gentleman, who was happy to have an excuse for being absent. And in truth the discharge of the guns had been in pursuance of his instructions.

Towards midnight the guests dispersed to their respective homes, the Arums and Cradles inviting Parke and Snobson into their coaches.

Lucy was despatched in Mr. Roland's carriage, which her new aunt had procured for that purpose, as *her own* was too heavy to be driven quickly, and she had promised *her sister* to send Lucy home that night.

Old John Dowly and Edmund Lowe were the last to depart, the one in his old-fashioned gig, and the other on foot, he being a famous walker.

Then the house was carefully closed under the directions of Mrs Griselda Winkle, who now assumed the reins in earnest, and informed the domestics, male and female, and particularly the latter, and in the presence of her assenting lord, that every command she issued was to be implicitly obeyed. The housekeeper and the cook looked rebellion, but made no opposition. They knew that Griselda was not an inexperienced timid miss, for she had long kept a house of her own, and was familiar with the use of bolts and bars. And when the doors were made fast, she undertook to allot apartments

for the various lodgers, having a most extraordinarily accurate comprehension of the plan and capacity of the fine old mansion. The females were sent to the most distant chambers, while Walter's apartment on the second floor was only separated from her own by the corridor that ran between. The doors were opposite. Sergeant Blore occupied a small room at the head of the stairs, communicating with Walter's by a door in the thin partition. He had long occupied this room, as it was convenient to his chief, and Mr. Winkle had intimated a desire that he should continue to sleep there.

Finally the key was turned in the door opposite to Walter's, and all was still. Not even a retiring step was heard. The only sound that arose on the ear was the ticking of the great high clock in the hall below, which seemed to be more distinctly heard at every successive swing of the pendulum.

Walter, after lying awake some fifteen minutes, arose softly, opened his door, and descended the stairway in his stocking feet. He proceeded to the rear door of the hall, which he opened noiselessly. He then beckoned his confederates under the spreading chestnut tree. Bill Dizzle came first, and was followed by a dozen others, bearing muskets, whose burnished barrels glittered in the moonlight. But not a footfall was heard. All had divested themselves of their shoes. The door was carefully fastened after them, and they proceeded in single file up the great stairway, stepping softly after their leader. When turning at the head of the first flight, the rays of the moon streaming through the broad crescent-shaped window fell upon them, giving them the appearance of a spectral platoon traversing some haunted castle. Something resembling a superstitious awe was felt by Walter as he paused and looked down upon the silent party. He was not, however, to be deterred by any such consideration; and continued to ascend until he reached the narrow door leading out upon the roof. This was raised without difficulty, and the whole party emerged again into the open air.

The roof was nearly flat, and the eaves were surmounted by a balustrade, which gave the building a castellated aspect when viewed from a distance.

Walter posted his men in a line directly over the chamber occupied by his uncle and aunt, and made them all sit down. He then suspended a cord from the roof over the window of his own room, the upper end being attached to Dizzle's wrist. By

this means signals were to be given. Walter then hastened back to his room and secured the lower end of the cord. After the completion of these preparations, he opened the door in the partition, and reported every thing to the old sergeant, who had impatiently awaited him, with his great eye blinking in the moonlight. It had been with difficulty that Walter prevented the old mutilated warrior from leading the party in person. It was obvious that his wooden leg not only rendered him incapable of scaling walls, but made it impossible for him to advance or retire without producing sounds incompatible with any plan of secrecy.

"Have they wooden rammers?" asked Blore.

"Yes."

"And their breeches padded?"

"Yes."

"And instructions not to let any burning wads fall before the windows in front?"

"Every thing has been done as you directed."

"Then creep out and listen if your uncle is asleep. If he sleeps, he snores. He always does."

"I heard him snoring before I came to you."

"Very well, give the signal, and then jump into your bed But don't *you* snore. They might suspect something."

Walter pulled the string. The next moment the twelve muskets were fired in admirable order, making but a single report, and that a terrific one, the echoes and reverberations of which could be heard for many moments afterwards among the distant hills.

"Ha-ah! wa-ah!" screamed Griselda, whose lids had not yet been visited by slumber, in consequence of the distressing nasal sounds so impolitely vented by her lord. But when the appalling report overhead rent her tympanums, she sprang up and screamed with a desperate violence, sufficient almost to awaken the dead.

"Bless me! what's all this?" asked Mr. Winkle, starting up.

"Oh! they're shooting all round the house! Faugh! I'm suffocated with the smoke!" It being warm, the upper sashes of the windows had been lowered to admit the fresh air.

"Sergeant Blore! what does this mean!" cried Mr. Winkle, fully aroused by the smell of gunpowder, which he knew could not be the effects of a dream, or the creation of a lively imagination. "Blore, I say! D—— your eye!" continued

Winkle, running across the chamber in his gown, "I'll court-martial you! Get in bed again, madam. I'll return as soon as I find out the leader of this party. If Blore is not in his bed, he is guilty. Honor or no honor—I'll give them a lesson! I can't find my slippers. Insubordination and disobedience! The legs of my drawers are twisted. I'll have them all drummed out of my service! Here's your night-cap, madam. Blore! Blore, I say!" continued the exasperated commander, striding across the corridor, and bursting open the door of the sergeant's chamber.

"Who comes there? Halt, or I fire!" cried the sergeant, and at the same time cocking a pistol, which could be distinctly heard by the intruder.

"It's your general, Blore. Don't kill him on his wedding night. I thought you were the leader of a storming party that won't permit Mrs. Winkle to enjoy any repose. Have you been up, Blore?"

"No, sir, upon the word of a soldier."

"Did you not just now hear the report of musketry under the very walls of the house?"

"No, sir; you must have been dreaming of battles."

"No, Blore. Besides, our chamber is filled with the smoke."

"Imagination."

"I tell you no! Griselda heard it, and is now almost smothered with the smell of burnt powder."

"It may be the devil's breath. I think he is an admirer of hers."

"Irreverent monster! How dare you speak in that manner of my spouse!" Uttering these indignant words, the commander closed the door violently, and returned to his own chamber. After reconnoitering the ground from the windows, and finding no symptoms of animation, he rejoined his spouse, assuring her that the enemy had fled, and would not be likely to disturb them again.

Griselda, in tears, vented a great many reproaches, and succeeded in obtaining a promise that certain reforms should be instituted in the household.

Then profound silence again ensued, which was, however, soon interrupted by the snoring of Napoleon, a sound for which Walter was impatiently listening.

Again the signal was given, and another volley ensued, more startling than the first. Walter leaped into his bed.

Blore began to snore. The bride renewed her screams, and the heavy body of the groom was distinctly heard in its descent to the floor. Seizing a brace of pistols, Mr. Winkle rushed to the window, and discharged them through the clouds of smoke at whatever objects might be standing below, for the earth itself was invisible.

"I am firing balls!" said he. "It will not be child's play if any one comes in range. Where is my sword?" he continued, rushing to the corner where the weapon invariably hung. "Now, I'll see who it is!" He ran out of the chamber, and once more entered the sergeant's room.

"Who goes there?" cried the sergeant.

"I! it is Napoleon! The house is beset! My sword is drawn, and shall not be returned to its scabbard until my enemies are subdued. Follow me!" He turned about and descended the broad stairway, while Griselda called upon him in vain to return. He rushed out into the yard as soon as he could open the door, by which time the sergeant had joined him, and they searched in every direction for the invaders. The sword was thrust into every bush, and Blore was ordered to fire his pistols at every tree. But no enemy could be found, although the smoke of the recent discharges descended from the roof and rolled in volumes over the lawn.

Meantime a suspicion crossed the mind of Griselda, that Walter might be the contriver of the mischief, and she made no scruple of satisfying herself on that point in a very direct manner. She ran into his chamber, and never paused until she stood beside his bed.

"Are you here, Walter?" she asked, although, at the time, she held him firmly by the wrist.

"Of course I am," was the reply. "But what are you doing here?"

"Oh! had I known I was to suffer thus," she exclaimed hysterically, "I would not have married your uncle! To think I should be so insulted and frightened the first night of my married life! What shall I do, dear Walter!"

"Go to bed!"

"Your uncle has gone out to hunt the villains, and I am frightened half to death."

"What is the matter? What frightens you?"

"Did you not hear it? They have been firing a hundred guns under our windows."

"They have? I must have been asleep. Who did it?"

"No one knows. There! didn't you hear that? It is Sergeant Blore's pistols Somebody will be shot!"

"I'll get up and see what it's all about. Go out, Gusset, till I dress."

"Don't call me Gusset, Walter."

"Very well. But I must get up."

"Do, Walter," said Griselda, retiring, "and rouse all the people about the house. Find out the names of the ringleaders, and I'll answer for it, they will not frighten us another time."

Walter manifested great zeal in his endeavors to discover the guilty party. Every one was roused; and by the time his uncle and the sergeant returned from their fruitless search without, every apartment within had been explored, but to no purpose.

But before attempting again to seek the repose so imperatively demanded after such unreasonable interruptions, a new idea occurred to Mrs. Winkle, and the proposition she made obtained the hearty approbation of her lord. This was to bring the bull-dog from the garrison, and to turn the whole pack of hounds loose on the lawn. The order was issued, and immediately executed; and as the bull-dog was really a very dangerous animal, the chief solaced himself with the belief that the house could not be again approached with impunity by his tormentors.

Quiet being again restored under such favorable auspices, and one or two blunderbusses having been ordered into Napoleon's room from the armory, the bride again retired to her canopied couch—and was just falling into an oblivious slumber, when Walter gave the signal, and another volley was fired!

The bridegroom tumbled out of bed, and running to the nearest window, fired the blunderbuss at random, which took effect among the pack of hounds below, and such a squalling and howling ensued as never before assailed Griselda's ears. She screamed, and tore her dishevelled hair, while her lord gave vent to volley after volley of fierce maledictions. Again he rushed into the sergeant's room, into which, as into all the rest, the smoke had by this time penetrated, and again his ears were saluted with the interrogation,

"Who goes there?"

They descended to the lawn, the chief with his drawn

sword, and the sergeant with his pistols. No less than four of the hounds lay wounded and howling on the green sward. They were despatched for the sake of peace. But they made no discovery of the offenders.

And Griselda ran into Walter's room a second time, and implored him, if he were concerned in the annoyance, to cease for her sake, and for his own sake in the future.

"Do you not see I have been lying quietly in my bed?" said he. "I am almost determined to get up and go home!"

"I wish you would, and take me with you!" said the weeping bride. "They have made no discovery," said she. "I hear them fastening the hall door again. I will sit up the rest of the night and watch. What string is this, Walter?" she continued, having espied the cord that hung down from the balustrade and entered the window.

"What string? Oh, that's nothing! Let it alone. Don't touch it! It is a part of a bird's nest above."

"I won't have birds' nests on the house. Let them build in the trees!" Saying this she pulled the cord violently, and the next moment a volley, more stunning than any that had preceded it, rent the air. Poor Griselda fell fainting in the arms of Walter, who bore her into her own room, and laid her on her bed, where he left her. As he returned to the corridor he perceived his uncle, followed by the sergeant, re-descending the stairway with all the expedition in their power, evidently impressed with the belief that the intruders would now stand revealed before them. But the commander was certainly disappointed, and he retraced his steps, expressing his belief that his house was infested by the ghosts of soldiers slain in battle.

"That may satisfy you," said his recovered spouse, incensed at being left alone in her swoon, "but not me. I don't believe in such things at all. It is a contrivance to mortify and vex me, and I'll find it out. Let them fire away. They don't hurt us. I'm not alarmed now. There will be an end of it in the morning. But I want you to promise that when I have detected and exposed the villains, they shall never come about the house again."

This was readily granted, and soon after the overwrought Napoleon's snore began once more to be heard. Walter was listening in the corridor, but now Griselda, who had risen, was on the alert, and nerved to brave any thing that phantoms

blood might do. She glided to the door, and with
e key-hole distinguished the breathing of the young
heard him retire to his own room, and she followed
It was just when he extended his hand to seize
at his arm was grasped by his aunt. He turned
nd gazed at her.
aught you, Walter! I understand it now. I
sound came from above. It was a wicked contri-
at have I done to deserve this?"
was only a little sport. Don't tell uncle Winkle,
ll not be disturbed any more."
I make no promises, unless you promise—swear—
ter. I have you in my power, now. Beware!
cape until the next offence. But the villains shall
from my sight. See! the day has broken, and
t to rise. I will awaken your uncle, and show
ed to disturb his peace."
unt—dear aunt——"
o late. *You* may escape, but not the rascals on
only wish the foolish sergeant had been among

tened to put her threat in execution, and assisted
a hasty adjustment of his toilet.
nding party—or rather the instruments of the con-
e plot—were discovered, and made the victims of
engeance. They were ordered down, and forbid-
ach the house again under penalty of dismissal
vice.
ile, however, escaped identification by an acci-
large of his musket, which completely blackened

fter all, a great triumph for the mistress of the
t, as it afforded her an opportunity of making
ds of her lord, to accomplish which might, other-
equired much ingenuity and long suffering.

CHAPTER XII.

A MOONLIGHT ADVENTURE, AND SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES.

Although Lucy had listened to so many proposals of a nature calculated to produce an exaltation of spirits, yet, as we have seen, she was the unresisting victim of a sad depression during the progress of the festivities. When the time was announced for her departure, a scene of contention between the coachmen of the Arums and the Crudles, for precedence, occurred in front of the portico, and within her view, while the carriage which was to convey her to the village was kept in waiting. *She* felt no resentment, however, and could not endure any additional mortification. The tumult of her sensations, and the whirl of her recently startled thoughts, had not sufficiently subsided, for her attention to be arrested by the scene of strife she witnessed: and the imperturbable submission of her own coachman, prevented him from taking advantage of the opportunity afforded of departing with his charge, while the point in dispute between the rival whips was undergoing the process of adjustment.

Her aunt stood upon one side, and Walter on the other. Lowe appeared when the Arums and the Crudles drove off, and assisted her up the carriage steps. He whispered, that although he would return on foot, he thought he might be able to keep in view of her, and act in the capacity of a guard. This was after Walter had intimated that if he were in Lowe's place he would be Lucy's companion inside; but the intimation had not been approved by Griselda. The distance was short, and the moon shone with great splendor.

Mr. Dowly turned his slow pacing horse to the right and pursued his way directly towards his own isolated mansion. Lowe bounded forward in pursuit of Lucy's carriage. But he was not able to overtake it. The driver, hitherto [illegible] upon seeing the pedestrian cracked [illegible] dashed several hundred yards ahead, and sudd[illegible] Had Lowe been something nearer the object of his interest, undoubtedly his heart had been thrilled to its centre. As it was, he imagined that cries had been uttered.

No sooner did the carriage pause than a man stepped from behind a huge sycamore tree, and pulled open the door. He sprang in, and the horses were again driven at a rapid pace.

"Mr. Roland! What is meant by this conduct?" cried Lucy, striving to be calm, or rather to repress her rising fears, as if she could not be convinced that all her presence of mind and physical strength would soon be called in requisition.

"That I adore you, Lucy! Do not be alarmed, my beautiful bird. My apparent rudeness has for its excuse the distraction produced by your maddening charms! We use stratagems to entrap the sweet birds we treat so tenderly. Be assured that no harm is intended. I listened to the jeers of the Arums, the exultations of the Crudles, the depreciating remarks of every body, upon your destitute condition, and I resolved to rescue you from such a humiliating predicament——"

"Mr. Roland!" said Lucy, freeing the hand he had seized, "you confess, then, that this rude and ungentlemanly conduct was deliberately planned."

"For your good—for your benefit, as well as mine. I love you to madness—that is my excuse. Let your beauty plead for me, as Ann's did for Richard——"

"He was a villain! Heaven forbid that you should be one, too! Sir! if you hope to be forgiven—if you desire to be admitted again into my presence—go—I beseech you, leave me instantly!"

"Will you promise to receive me as a lover—an humble adoring lover?"

"I promise nothing. I never have encouraged your addresses."

"I cannot leave you without some pledge upon which to rest my hopes. I cannot live without you. And why not be mistress of all I possess—and now? All I am—all I have, shall be yours. The Arums and Crudles shall triumph over you no more. Your mother shall be independent. Be mine to night, and to-morrow your own hands shall consign to the flames the mortgage which encumbers your mother's homestead."

"Leave me, sir, before it be too late to retract or to repair the insult you have offered me. Yours I never can be. I would rather subsist on the crumbs that fall from the tables of the Arums and Crudles, than to share your wealth, en-

cumbered with your hateful presence! Leave me before we reach my mother's door, or I will call assistance——"

"Do not believe, my charming girl, that I am capable of permitting any such folly. Your unequalled beauty, and my wild and passionate love, must be my justification."

"What do you mean? Do you intend to prevent me from going to my mother?"

"I will take you to a better home. You shall be the mistress of my house, command my servants, hold my purse——"

"Let me go!" cried the trembling girl, springing towards the carriage door.

"No. It is useless for the lovely bird to struggle," said he, forcibly withholding her. "Hear me—listen to reason. I do not desire to take advantage of your helpless condition. I will prove my sincerity. I have a preacher in readiness, who shall unite us in holy wedlock. It will not detain you five minutes. Then, if you will pledge me that our secret shall be kept until the proper time for divulging it, you may depart immediately, and no one will be the wiser, until we choose to inform them. You shall take the mortgage with you, and my check for any sum you may name."

"Villain! Unhand me! You will have to answer for this! It is base—it is cowardly!"

"Lucy, do not spurn my love! The highest born, the most accomplished, the most wealthy ladies in the country, have striven to secure my heart and hand. I love you—you alone, and cannot exist without you. Do not speak of vengeance, for, distracted by love of you, I have become dangerous. If you have any affection for your brother, do not betray him into perilous undertakings. If he assails me, he may fall—without you, I do not care to live. I am desperate!"

"Let me depart! I ask no more! You shall not be exposed. But if you detain me longer you will be overtaken by one who will quickly avenge me!"

"Who? Ah, Lowe! I cannot see your blushes—but I feel your throbbing arteries! You love him! That is the secret. A poor, pitiful, insignificant rival! Let him beware! If you would save your brother and friend from my vengeance—if you would save your own character from stain—for who will believe you did not go to my house of your own accord!—let the parson I have provided perform the marriage cere-

mony. You shall then fly to your mother's roof before your absence creates alarm—and our secret will be in our own keeping. No scandal will be uttered, no blood will be spilt."

"Merciful heaven!" cried Lucy. "And am I thus delivered into the snare of an implacable demon! Oh, my aunt, surely you were not capable of participating in this diabolical scheme!"

"Your new aunt is as much a fool in her way as your uncle is in his. She was not trusted with my secret. It is in the keeping only of you and I, and the preacher, who is discreet and may be depended upon. Consent, Lucy, without more ado, and all will be well. No mortal ever loved with such vehemence as I do. I would sacrifice fortune, honor, life itself, rather than forego——"

"Villain!" cried Lucy, spurning his hand, "I will listen no more! Leave me, or suffer me to depart! I would rather be in my grave, than dwell in your presence an hour!"

"The carriage stops. We are at home, Lucy," said Roland, throwing open the door. They were in front of his house.

"I will not go into your house—hateful, dishonorable man! Coachman!" she continued, in a loud voice, "I command you to drive me home, to my mother's house!"

"Oh, my love," said Roland, with a smile of derision half betrayed by the rays of the moon resting on his profile, "the coachman has had his orders. He knows his duty. He will obey you when yonder preacher, awaiting our arrival, has uttered a few words over our joined hands."

"Never!" cried Lucy.

"Be reasonable, my charming bride. Every ear will be deaf to your cries. It will be but breath expended in vain. Let me assist you. I will carry you in my arms, so that your feet shall not touch the dew."

"Mercy! Help!" cried the poor girl, and fainted in the arms of the villain, who forced her from the carriage. But at that moment he felt the sharp teeth of Dew grasping his leg.

"Begone!" he said, endeavoring to shake the animal off. "The infernal dog is tearing my flesh!" he continued, placing the inanimate burden on the grass, and turning ferociously upon his tormentor. Dew relinquished his hold, and barked fiercely, but avoided the hands extended to grasp him, by re-

treating into a thicket of briers near the road side. Roland hurled a stone at him, without effect, and turned towards Lucy, who was recovering. She leaned on her elbow, and gazed round in bewilderment.

"Drive off!" cried Roland, to the coachman, who obeyed with alacrity.

"Off! off! Do not approach me!" cried Lucy, seeing the monster approach, followed by the faithful Dew, who again seized him.

With a fearful malediction, Roland once more turned upon his pertinacious foe, and with a determination to take his life. He was smarting under the infliction of his teeth, and furious at the thought of being balked by so unlooked-for and apparently so insignificant an impediment. Therefore he rushed upon the animal with desperate energy, regardless of the briery covert in which he took shelter. Dew uttered several cries as he was torn by the thorns, but still eluded his enemy. Roland, intent upon the destruction of the animal, continued the assault, unmindful for the moment of his reviving captive.

Lucy did not suffer the precious moments to pass unimproved. She started up and ran into a neighboring grove, which concealed her white dress. Under shelter of the descending boughs of a spreading cedar-tree, she paused for breath, and with her trembling hands sought to still the throbbings of her panting breast. Unseen herself, she could yet behold Roland striving to kill her faithful dog with a stake he had snatched from the fence in front of the lawn. Dew nevertheless effected his escape, and returned to the spot where his mistress had been lying. Roland, upon seeing the bird had flown, uttered the most furious oaths and threats. But in his impatience to extricate himself from the briery thicket, he was tripped up by a vine that grew among the bushes, and fell headlong to the ground.

Dew joined his mistress, and they plunged deeper into the woods. Lucy knew not whither they were going, but was happy in the thought of escaping an enemy whose presence was a greater calamity than any other that could possibly befall her.

Erelong the flying girl discovered a narrow path, partially illuminated by the rays of the moon straggling through the branches of the trees. She redoubled her speed, for she could

Roland calling aloud to his confederate (the pretended
her), to assist him in the search for the fugitive. Soon
oice ceased to be heard, and Lucy's spirits began to re-
Dew ran along before her, evincing by his large intel-
t eyes, and the shaking of his tail, his congratulations
appiness upon the escape of his mistress from the imme-
clutches of her cruel persecutor. But he had sufficient
ity to confine his manifestations of joy to the mute exhi-
s described. The slightest bark might have destroyed

fter traversing the path several hundred yards, Lucy
nduced to pause upon coming in view of a fence which
led the woods. Beyond were fields and meadows, and
nd there could be distinguished a farm house, its inmates
ngly steeped in profound repose, while she, who gazed
the silent scene, might conjecture in vain why she should
omed to be a midnight wanderer in unfrequented paths,
holly unconscious of the direction she should pursue to
the impending danger. Wearied, and wounded by the
s which had often opposed her progress, she sat down on
unk of a fallen tree, and wept in silence. As she turned
ale face in every direction, and saw no animate object
er spaniel which crouched at her feet, and heard no
s but those of the whippoorwill and the katydid, it more
nce occurred to her that she might be in a dream. She
d her eyes with her lily hands, and looked up at the
—"No! no!" said she, in low silvery tones, "it is not a
L. Would it were!" She covered her face, and falling
on her knees, uttered an humble petition to heaven
she might be speedily rescued from her unpleasant con-
L.

sound in the path she had traversed attracted her, and
ext moment a rabbit bounded out and sped past. Dew
up, but did not pursue it. He snuffed the air in the
ion whence it came, and uttered a low growl, while the
rose on his back. Lucy thought she heard a movement
g the bushes; but was not certain. Her heart palpitated
ly, and painfully. Then she felt certain she could detect
ow sounds of whispers in the dark path behind. She
—but knew not where to fly. In the fields were no hid-
laces; in the woods she would encounter her persecutor.
1' It was the low murmur of a human voice! She could

not be mistaken; and Dew growled more fiercely than ever, and was in the act of springing towards the foe.

At that moment approaching wheels were heard, and Lucy perceived that a road ran along the outer side of the fence. Hope lent her strength, and she bounded over the high fence as the gig of good old John Dowly drove up. The gentle horse paused of his own accord, snorted aloud, and thrust forward his ears, but did not attempt to run away.

"Who are you?" asked John Dowly, staring at Lucy as if beholding an apparition.

"Save me! Save me! Oh, Mr. Dowly!" cried she.

"I will! Poor thing! Who is it?" responded he, as he assisted her into the gig. She fainted upon his breast, after feebly saying, "Take me home."

The dog barked fiercely, and words of disappointment and rage could be heard in the woods.

"Merciful powers!" exclaimed the old man, upon driving into the unobstructed moonlight, and recognizing the face of Lucy, who began to recover. "My poor, lovely child! how does it happen that I find you thus, and alone? But do not attempt to speak, before you have regained your strength. I *will* take you home. The next road we cross leads to town. You are safe, now. Don't be distressed. Old John Dowly would lose his head before a hair of yours should be injured."

"Bless you, sir!"—said Lucy. "May heaven bless you! You have saved me. Another moment, and I should have been in his power!"

"In whose power, my child? But I need not ask, since I know too well the diabolical proprietor of these lands." Saying this, the old gentleman whipped his horse into a brisk trot, and turning down the next road, seemed to be intent on reaching the village as quickly as possible.

But before they reached the village, Lucy had summoned sufficient strength and resolution to relate every thing that had transpired. The old gentleman sympathized with her, wept with her, but counselled her to tell no one else but her mother, who would doubtless be governed by prudential considerations. Roland was an artful and dangerous character; and it would be better to avoid him than to contend against him. He was surrounded by creatures of desperate character, whose greatest delight was in the consummation of evil deeds.

Lucy listened with attention; and shivered with terror at the thought of involving Walter, or any one dear to her, in a quarrel with the bold bad man.

Mr. Dowly, when they arrived in front of the widow's mansion, leapt down from the gig almost with the elasticity of youth, and conducted his fair charge to the door. Mrs. Winkle had been long expecting the return of Lucy, and on hearing the wheels, hastened to the door herself, for Biddy had been sent to bed at the usual hour.

"How pale you are, Lucy!" said she, when the lamp revealed the features of her child. "What has happened? Who came with you?"

"I, madam," said the old gentleman, whose person was disclosed when the door turned wider.

"Oh, Mr. Dowly! The one, of all others, I would have chosen to conduct her home. I am very thankful, sir, for your kind attention. I am fearful though it has put you to inconvenience. It is very late. But you need not return—Walter is away. Pray come in and occupy his chamber."

"No—no—I thank you, my dear madam. I will drive to the inn. But with your permission I will call in the morning and take breakfast with you. Good night. Good night," continued the old man, retiring.

When the door was made fast, Lucy fell into her mother's arms and wept bitterly, and yet with feelings of thankfulness that she was once more in safety under the roof of her parent.

The tale was soon told, and was listened to without the widow's usual merriment. She embraced her child repeatedly, long incapable of utterance, and caressed the faithful spaniel, who evinced unbounded joy.

"Mr. Dowly is right, Lucy," at length said the widow, with seriousness. "He has ever shown a sincere interest in the welfare of my family. He is experienced in the affairs of the world, and can foresee evils which those of a less deliberate circumspection might only feel. If Walter knew what has occurred, who could restrain him? And there are others beside who might seek to punish the villain, and might fall in the attempt. All we can do with safety is to avoid any species of contact with him in future."

"But, dear mother," said Lucy, "we are, as he said, very poor; and he holds the mortgage on our house."

"True. I will write to my brother to pay it. Yet I dislike making such an application. I am fearful we have not understood Gusset's true character. I will mention the business when Napoleon visits us the next time. If Roland should call for the interest, I will pay him with the money the Dibbles have deposited in bank. You must not be seen by him—I shall not fear to meet him. He is rich and influential, and might have been respected as a rejected suitor: but to say that one of his age is capable of conceiving so violent a passion as to be driven involuntarily into such an excess of outrage—no—no! I can have no patience with him! He must be a villain. But it may not be prudent to tell him so. He might declare, and even prove, by some of his profligate creatures, that you accompanied him to his house voluntarily!"

After Lucy had retired to her chamber, she was impelled by some mysterious impulse to cast her eyes in the direction of Lowe's cottage on the opposite side of the street. The young man's chamber was still lighted, and his shadow on the wall could be discerned. He moved backwards and forwards with folded arms and drooping head. Why did he keep such late vigils? was the query the distressed girl propounded to herself.

Lowe continued his solitary promenade until startled at a late hour by the report of musketry, which came booming on the still air from the country mansion of Mr. Winkle. He had likewise observed the pause of the carriage which conveyed Lucy from the mansion, and beheld Roland get into it. He had no doubt it was Roland. But whether or not the proceeding had the connivance and sanction of Lucy, he was unable to determine. If so, then he had been grievously deceived in her character, and he felt that his fate would be an unhappy one. But had he ever seen any thing in her conduct, or heard any thing in relation to her character, which might warrant a supposition that she entertained a partiality for that bad man? No. All had been just the reverse. And yet there could be no doubt of what he had seen. There could be no denying the fact which he had beheld that night with his own eyes. Such were his thoughts. "Oh!" cried he, clasping his forehead, "if she be not pure, where, where is purity to be found on earth! But may not she still be so! Might not he have entered the carriage without her consent,

and in spite of her objections and opposition? Ay, but then to accompany him—or suffer herself to be driven elsewhere than to her parents' mansion—and at that late hour of the night! I am not certain I heard her screams. And would she not have uttered them loudly if he had forced her to accompany him in another direction? True, she is not one of those falsely delicate, mincingly-sensitive creatures, who cry out at the buzzing of a fly, and she might not have immediately known they diverged from the proper direction. But would he, bold and wicked as he is, have resorted to such a measure in the vicinity of so many returning guests? Oh, Lucy! if you have been too weak to resist his blandishments, farewell—farewell for ever! We must never meet again. But I will *know*, yes, *know*—not merely suspect—your complicity in this act, before I regard you as fallen. But how shall I know it? From whom obtain the information? Ay, himself! Yes, Roland—whatever your lips may utter, your face, your conduct under my gaze, shall reveal enough for my comprehension. And if you alone are guilty, beware of her avenger!"

The young man turned aside and threw himself on his couch. A train of cars at that moment paused before the inn, and once the lover conceived the idea of rushing into them and abandoning the place for ever. He was withheld by the hope that, after all, Lucy's conduct might not prove to be culpable. Should that hope be fallacious, the next night he would take his final departure.

He arose the next morning unrefreshed, after a sleepless night. While tasting the coffee which had been brought in by Mrs. Edwards, his attention was attracted by one of Roland's servants who galloped up to the door of Mrs. Winkle's house. He saw him deliver a letter, which he did not doubt related to the occurrence of the preceding night. Soon after, he ascertained from his cook, who had been in his neighbor's kitchen, that Lucy had arrived at home late in the night, and was now quite ill.

Supposing Roland would be in the village as usual that morning, and would come by the road he was accustomed to traverse, Lowe determined to meet him. Placing a brace of pistols in a small green bag, he descended to the street and walked briskly away from the village. He had not gone more than a mile before he saw the one he was in quest of.

Roland approached alone, leisurely riding his blooded steed. Lowe paused beside a large willow tree that overhung the brook on the road side, and putting down the bag, folded his arms calmly on his breast, and awaited the arrival of the author of his unhappiness.

As Roland drew near a supercilious frown gathered on his brow, and his ruddy complexion assumed a deeper color. He did not design to utter any salutation, and was riding past after an equivocal nod, when Lowe advanced a step, and signified his desire to confer with him.

"Do you wish me to stop?" asked Roland, slightly drawing the rein.

"I do, sir," was the reply.

"Well—what do you want?"

"I desire to know if you did not enter Miss Winkle's carriage last night, when she was returning home."

"The deuce you do! No, sir—I entered my own carriage."

"True, it was your carriage. But that is a subterfuge."

"A subterfuge! Sir, do you know who you are speaking to?" demanded Roland, in choler.

"Perhaps not distinctly. But I am desirous of knowing. Be calm, sir; at least until I obtain the information I seek. Then your fury may have vent."

"What information do you seek? By what right do you seek any of me? Have you heard any thing in relation to the matter you mentioned just now?"

"No, sir; not a word. But I saw it."

"Saw it? Then what further would you be pleased to know?"

"Precisely in what capacity you entered the carriage. Whether as an acceptable companion, or in opposition to the lady's will. You will much oblige me by answering frankly and truly."

"I shall do no such thing, sir."

"Then I shall be happy to suppose it was *not* in accordance with the lady's wishes."

"Suppose what you please. I care not. But as the lady herself has not, as I infer, made the matter known, and as you were the only witness of what transpired, if the occurrence should be made public, I shall not be at a loss to know who

divulged the secret. I desire that it be kept a secret, for several reasons, and I warn you not to mention it, or——"

"What?"

"You will incur my vengeance."

"I will not refer to it—unless it be to the lady herself. But, sir, I beseech you tell me whether or not the meeting was in pursuance of an appointment."

"You have already supposed it was not—let that suffice. I will not be interrogated. Who are you? What are you doing in the village? By what right do you aspire to be the champion of Miss Winkle?"

"I am a man, sir—a free man in a free country. It is not necessary to dwell upon my means of living, so long as I owe no one, and ask no alms of any body. In regard to your last question, as we are alone, and as I seek information from you upon which my happiness or misery may depend—know that I have conceived a deep and pure affection for that young lady——"

"Ha! ha! The secret's out!"

"Sir! you cannot be a lover, and laugh at such an announcement. Therefore she must be innocent, and you a villain!"

"What! Do you dare——" cried Roland, raising his whip.

"Dismount, sir, and you shall have satisfaction," said Lowe, stepping back.

"I will dismount and punish you!" said Roland, leaping from his horse, and supposing the threat might be easily executed, as he was a larger and stronger man than Lowe.

"Throw your whip away, and meet me as a gentleman should," said Lowe, stooping down and drawing forth his pistols. Taking one in each hand he presented the breeches.

"You are armed. I did not know that," said Roland, pale, and pausing.

"Take your choice, sir."

"No, sir. I am not to be waylaid in this manner. I will have you arrested as a highwayman."

"Are you a coward, too?"

"Coward! because I will not exchange shots with a vagabond?"

"Sir, I am a gentleman, better born, and better bred than yourself," continued Lowe, advancing. "Take your choice,

and fire as soon as you please. I will give you that advantage. I am no duellist—but desperate. I would rather die than know Lucy to be false, and——"

"I will not," said Roland, trembling. "I will not take either. You may murder me—but yonder is a witness." He pointed to a solitary pedestrian at some distance who was approaching.

"I am no murderer—but you are a craven and a villain. Cease your designs upon that young lady, or dread my vengeance. We will meet again. Go."

But before the last words were uttered, Roland was mounted and spurring towards the village. When he was dashing across one of the slight bridges which span the sloughs through which the water from the river flowed at high tide, he was thrown by a sudden side-spring of his horse, and fell sprawling in the centre of the hard road.

Bill Dizzle, aroused by the clatter of hoofs had suddenly risen up among the spatter docks, with a huge frog transfixed and kicking in expiring agonies on his spear. His presence in the slough was no unusual apparition to man or beast, but as he had not yet washed the black stains of burnt powder from his face, the horse had failed to recognize him, and perhaps supposed him to be the devil himself rising to the surface of the earth. Hence his affright.

"Blazes!" cried Bill, wading out of the scum covered water. "Who is it? There he lays as dead as a frog!" He approached the stunned and inanimate form, and stood over it in silent amazement, not knowing exactly what he ought to do, but strongly impressed with the desire to accomplish something or other. So, happening to glance towards the horse, which now stood in the vicinity snorting and trembling, he ran to him, and taking the reins, tied him to the fence on the road side. That done, he scarcely knew what to do next. He returned to the fallen rider, and again stood over him in silent contemplation, until startled by the sound of approaching wheels. Fortunately it was the carriage of Dr. Prangle. The doctor, upon seeing that some one lay in the dust, and doubtless required his services, did not wait for a special summons, but descended immediately and opened a vein.

"How is this?" exclaimed the doctor, after seeing that the blood began to flow. "How did it happen that Mr. Roland, the best horseman in the county, was thrown?"

"His critter shied when I ris up in the water lilies," said Bill Dizzle.

"And no wonder!" exclaimed the doctor, gazing at Bill. "It was enough to frighten the d—l himself! So—" he continued, examining his patient, "limbs all sound—no fracture—animation returning—a groan—good sign—stunning concussion though—few bruises—that's all—soon recover—short case."

"Dr. Prangle, what is the matter?" asked Roland, recovering his speech, and seeing the blood flow from his arm.

"You have been thrown from your horse, and may be seriously injured internally. You must be kept quiet—take anodynes, and lie still, in bed. Here, you frightful frog-catcher, help me to lift him into my carriage. I will take you to my house——"

"No," said Roland—"take me to the inn."

"Very good. But you cannot lie there so composedly as at my house."

He was conveyed to the inn without delay, while Bill mounted the still snorting horse and followed the carriage.

Roland, upon being put to bed, smiled at the anxious solicitude of the doctor, and whispered the innkeeper—one of his tenants—that he was not much injured, and would be able to sit up as soon as Prangle left him. And no sooner had the doctor taken his leave, with injunctions for his patient to remain in a state of perfect composure, and promising to return within an hour, than Roland sat up in bed, and vented a volley of curses on the head of the astonished Dizzle. Bill retreated in consternation from his presence.

"Send for David Deal," said Roland, when Dizzle had disappeared. Deal was an enterprising Quaker, and considered favorable to the election of Roland to Congress, on account of sundry moral reform which the Babbleton candidate was pledged to advocate.

"Friend Ralph, I am sorry to see thee confined to thy bed," said David Deal, who happened to be near, and was ushered into the presence of the invalid.

"It is nothing," said Roland. "Merely stunned by a fall from my horse. If it were not for fear of offending the doctor, and losing his vote, I would not remain here an hour. David," he continued, when they were alone, "do you know the character and pursuit of your tenant in —— street?"

"Thee means neighbor Lowe?"

"Yes. What is his trade, or profession, or pursuit, by which he earns a subsistence?"

"Thee knows quite as much as I do, or as any body does."

"Does he pay his rent?"

"He pays in advance. Thee my be sure he pays me, or I would not let him stay."

"The deuce!"

"Friend Ralph, I do no wrong in securing what is justly due to me. And I hope you will not urge the payment of the note of mine thee holds, if I pay thee the interest punctually."

"But does not this fellow owe some one in the village?"

"I think not. I have taken the liberty, as I thought it not improper, to inquire a little into his transactions. The shopkeeper, the butcher, the baker, and even the milkman, all say he pays them down, and seems to have cash enough to answer his purposes. Thee knows he don't live extravagantly, and his expenses cannot be very great But friend Ralph, what does thee say concerning my note?"

"Confound your note—I don't want money!"

"I am much obliged to thee—for it is very difficult to obtain funds at a reasonable interest; and it is generous and liberal in thee to indulge thy friend in such times as these. I am sorry I cannot give thee any information concerning friend Edmund. All I know is that he has many books, and is seen to do nothing but read and write, and sometimes indulge in the abominable amusement of whist, and in the idle sport of fishing and gunning He is also very intimate with Edith, and seems to have an attachment for her daughter Lucy——"

"The impudent puppy!" said Roland.

"If thee thinks so, the women don't. Edith owes thee a large sum of money, and it is said she is very poor. I am sorry to hear it—for she has always been a good neighbor. I hope she may be able to pay thee thy interest——"

"The mortgage shall be foreclosed, and the property sold"

"If it must be so, will thee be a bidder for the lot?"

"No. I have enough real estate"

"Then if thee would be satisfied with my bond, I would like to be the purchaser, for a dozen good houses might be

erected on the front part of the *ground* and rented for three hundred dollars each. If it *must* be sold, and no one will bid more than myself, I could not be justly blamed for becoming the owner, although I should be sorry for Edith. I see such things are unpleasant to thee, and will change the subject. Thy friends will have a large meeting next week, and are determined to make a strong rally in thy favor. I hope thee will be able to address them."

"I will be able."

"Thee will be supported by the reformers. It is high time the evil practices of the people were amended. But, as the meeting is open for all, they say thy enemies will have their speakers also."

"Who will they have to reply to me?"

"Walter Winkle—the college bred son of Edith."

"He!"

"They say so. But thee knows he is a wild rattling youth, without experience."

"He is over twenty-one years of age. Of course he will vote for Plastic, my competitor. Well, I'll see if he cannot be humbled. Who proposed this matter of getting up a speaker to answer me?"

"I learn it was Colonel Oakdale, who thee knows is a candidate for the State Senate, and is, they say, to be a candidate for a seat in the Senate of the United States."

"The mischief!"

"That is milder than——"

"The d—l!"

"Yea, verily. I bid you good day, friend Ralph, and I hope thee will soon be well."

David Deal, not without some misgivings of the morality of the candidate of the reformers, withdrew about his business, which was, it must not be denied, the art and mystery of money-making.

CHAPTER XIII.

LUCY DETERMINES TO FLY—AND WILL NOT TELL HER LOVER WHITHER.

Lucy, who had complained of being unwell at the usual hour for breakfast, upon learning that a letter had been received from Roland, arose and descended to the sitting-room, where her mother was perusing the long and passionate communication.

"Lucy," said Mrs. Winkle, as her daughter sat down at her side, "Roland writes like a lover. He declares upon his honor——"

"Which amounts to nothing, for he has none," interrupted Lucy.

"That may be. But he says his love grew so uncontrollable that he was not aware of the gross impropriety of his conduct, until after your escape, when his own condemnation of himself, was as bitter as any reproaches it would be possible for any one else to utter. He says he is penitent, and will cheerfully undergo any suffering and pay any penalty we may impose. He implores our forgiveness, and entreats that the occurrence may never be referred to again."

"I will not mention it."

"I think it should not be known. The Arums and Cradles would hint that you had not been abducted against your will."

"That would be terrible," replied Lucy, smiling. "I learned from Walter last night that they abducted his two friends, almost forcibly. I hope that is Walter ringing."

"Who is it, Biddy?" asked Mrs. Winkle, when the girl appeared.

"Bill Bizzle, mam."

"Biddy," said Lucy, "I wish you would learn to call his name correctly. It is Bill Dizzle."

"Yes, miss."

"Let him come in, if he desires it," said the widow; and a moment after Bill made his appearance, his face still unwashed.

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Lucy.

"Don't be frightened, like the horse," said the frog-catcher. "It's only the powder. Didn't you hear us last night? She's in a mighty stew about it, and she's vanished all the soldiers from the house a'ready."

"What do you mean?" asked the widow. Bill explained. But he had the tact to suppress the part Walter enacted.

"I fear your uncle," said the widow, turning to her daughter, "has got a mistress at last. Who would have thought the *humble* Gusset capable of seizing the reins so boldly, and holding them so firmly? If we desire a continuance of my brother's favors, I fear we will have to pay court to his wife."

"I fear the worst," said Lucy.

"But what have you to tell us, Bill?" demanded the widow.

"Only that Mr. Roland has been thrown by his horse, and——"

"Killed?" asked Lucy, quickly.

Bill related the whole affair and then departed.

"Did you desire to hear of his death?" asked Mrs. Winkle, laughing heartily.

"No, mother. But it would afford me a feeling of security to learn that he was disabled from perpetrating any species of mischief. If he recovers soon, I hope you will permit me to spend a portion of my time with my aunt."

"You know, child, that your aunt would not have you, after disobeying her injunction, and attending the wedding."

"I do not mean Aunt Wilsome; but Aunt Flora, in New York."

"My sister Flora! Why she lives alone. She keeps but one servant—and I am told her front door is not opened once a month. She would never visit me, nor invite any of the family to her house, for fear of the expense. She is in perpetual dread of going to the poor-house! And I don't know why, for she had not less than thirty or forty thousand dollars from my father's estate. I think such a project impracticable."

"You know, mother, the last time we called on her, when passing through the city, she seemed to take a fancy to me."

"Yes, she said she would like to enjoy your company, if it would not render you miserable to be cooped up in her poor establishment."

"And that is just what I desire—the utter seclusion, I

mean. I will read novels for her from morning till night, and will be the more contented from a knowledge that visitors cannot intrude upon my privacy. Indeed, mother, I am wretched in the vicinity of that bad man."

"Bad, I fear he is. Among all his explanations and promises, I do not remember a word about honorable marriage."

"True, mother—but even the thought of that would be misery to me. He mentioned it to me. And I am sure I heard his pretended clergyman utter some foul oaths. Pray do permit me to write to Aunt Flora!"

"Oh, you may write; and you may go to her, if she desires it, and will make you comfortable."

Lucy lost not a moment in commencing a long letter to her aunt. Fortunately she had acquired an insight into her character, during the brief visit referred to. Her aunt's sole pleasure in life was novel-reading, and the work she most admired, and which indeed proved she was not deficient in critical acumen, was "The Children of the Abbey." Hence it was not difficult for Lucy to excite her relative's interest by depicting her own wrongs and woes in the light of those of poor Amanda. And Roland's character and his persecutions were not dissimilar to Colonel Belgrave's. Lowe was another Mortimer. Without the necessity of revealing any real names, Lucy had ample materials to affect the sensibilities of her aunt; and she was not incompetent to the task of grouping her characters in the most imposing attitude.

Having finished her letter and sent it to the post office, Lucy felt relieved of the burden of painful apprehension which had oppressed her. Her spirits were recovered, her headache gone, and she sallied forth in the garden, singing one of the pathetic songs she loved. Old Dibble and his son Davy plucked for her the most beautiful and fragrant roses, and took delight in exhibiting their growing crops, the nests of the orioles, etc.

After lingering some minutes with the Dibbles, who were always cheered by her smiles, as their vegetables were by the rays of the sun, Lucy strolled to the extreme boundary of the ground, where a row of willows overhung the cool bright waters of the running brook. There she sat on a rustic seat in the shade, where she had passed so many happy hours of her childhood, and where she had often consumed the fleeting mo-

ments with Lowe, from whom she felt she was now about to be separated, perhaps for ever.

She continued her low song, uttering in the pauses many a deep sigh, while the heaving of her bosom attested the sincerity and depth of the feelings she expressed. It was during one of those pauses, when endeavoring to recollect some of the words which had escaped her memory, that she was startled by the disturbed flight of several birds whose wings fanned her cheeks, so close had been their confiding proximity. Upon turning, the object of her thoughts stood before her, pale, sad and desponding.

"Mr. Lowe! You frightened me, as well as the birds."

"The birds have taken wing and flown away. I trust you will not be so cruel as to follow their example. And yet I never deceived or injured them."

"Then why should they fly?"

"They know the power of man—the most insidious, wicked, fearful animal that was ever created."

"You speak that almost savagely."

"Sometimes I have the feelings of a savage!"

"Mercy! you frighten me! But I, too, expect to fly. In a few days it is probable these old familiar haunts will be deserted by their mistress. I came hither even now to take my leave of them."

"Is it so? And you go voluntarily?"

"Eagerly! It will be at my own earnest solicitation."

"Lucy, there is a seriousness in your manner. Will you not be candid with the unhappy being who adores you, and say why you desire to go?"

"Spare me—I would not breathe the reason. My mother only knows it."

"But you will be accompanied by some one? And you will not travel far?"

"By Walter. It will not be known where I shall be sojourning."

"Mystery! I would it were not so. But Walter accompanies you?"

"Certainly."

"And it will be desirable to have your friends ignorant of the place of your abode? I am sorry for it."

"There may be reasons why they should not know it. Oh, Mr. Lowe, do not question me further. Do not seek to

know why I would withdraw from my friends for a season. I go to avoid a great misery which threatens me here. Let that suffice."

"Lucy, we are now similarly situated. I have my mystery, and you have yours."

"And if yours were removed—how often have I said—but no—not now! yet mine might vanish, if yours were dispelled. Mr. Lowe, I have already avowed too much. I should have kept locked in my own breast the—the partiality I felt. But I have retained sufficient resolution never to take the irrevocable step you proposed, without my mother's hearty concurrence. And yet it would seem that my secret should not be withheld from you. I have the impulse to disclose it, and would do so were it not for the fear it might imperil your safety. No such motion can withhold you from disclosing yours. Between friends—between those who——there should be no secrets unrevealed, mysteries unexplained. But let us part in peace, and await the time when there shall be no necessity for any more reserve. I doubt not you are justified in concealing what you are so reluctant to impart. Then, Oh, doubt not me!"

"Ah, Lucy! I understand it all. Your secret is known to me. The danger you apprehend is past. We met this morning. He is both a villain and a coward!"

"What do you mean? What am I to understand by your words?"

"That I know every thing, up to the time the carriage diverged from the road it had been traversing. I saw him enter it. Then I saw no more, until I met him this morning and he refused to fight me. Look not so ghastly. It is not the subject of conversation, nor will it be. I was following your carriage, and beheld him enter it."

"Cruel—cruel Edmund! You would not attempt a rescue, supposing it *possible* I might be a willing captive!"

"I was not mounted."

"No matter! I was the victim of your ungenerous suspicions! If it had been a sister—a wife—there had been wings to your feet! No horses could have escaped your pursuit. Be it so! But learn that you did me great injustice. It was Roland—the monster above all others whom I most dread and despise. I can only say I escaped from him by means of the interposition of my faithful dog. I go to avoid his persecutions. That

is my secret. Let it suffice. You say you witnessed his intrusion—and although you did not interpose in my behalf, yet you sought an explanation of him, and offered him combat. You have an acknowledgment of my gratitude, although I could not have wished to see you imperil your life on my account. Farewell. *He* will not be likely to divulge his own baseness, and there can be no reason why you should disclose the unhappy predicament in which I was involved for a brief interval."

"Stay, Lucy! One moment more!" cried Edmund, seeking to detain her.

"No, sir! I will say no more. And I must labor under the painful apprehension that what I have already uttered, may not be credited by you, since my truth was doubted once."

Just at that moment a tremendous plunge in the bushes on the margin of the brook, followed by a great splash, arrested the attention of Lowe, and accelerated the retreating steps of Lucy.

"Blazes! But it's a whopper!" said Bill Dizzle, rising up, with a great frog struggling in the agonies of death on the point of his spear. "Mr. Lowe, Mr. Lowe!" he continued, "I followed him more nor a quarter o' a mile. See what lovely eyes he's got!"

Lowe, frowning, strode away, laboring under the painful conviction that he had both wronged and offended Lucy. She had left him almost in anger, certainly in affliction from the thought that he could be capable of doubting the propriety of her conduct. And she had not, and perhaps would not, inform him of the place of her future abode.

"Mr. Lowe," persisted Dizzle, following him, "I came to hunt *you*, when I found the frog. I come to tell you all about Mr. Roland's being flung by his horse——"

"Hah!" exclaimed Lowe, his ear attracted by the name of Roland. He listened attentively to Dizzle's narration, and was then moving forward again without uttering any remark on the occurrence, when Dizzle proceeded to add the substance of what he overheard in the conversation between Roland and the Quaker, for he had lingered near the door.

"No matter. I fear him not," said Lowe; "but I thank you, Bill. Do not let that base creature lead you into evil practices."

"I'll try not, sir; but I'm bound to vote for him."

"Why are you bound to vote for him? I supposed it was only in monarchical governments where landlords exercised such control over their tenants. This is a land of liberty, and he is a democrat."

"All I know is, if I don't vote for him, my sister will be turned out of her cabin. She told me so herself. But I don't like the way he talked to-day."

"It matters not—to me," said Lowe, turning aside, and leaping across the brook, leaving Dizzle to stare after him, and at his frog, alternately.

The unhappy man shut himself up in his chamber, a prey to many painful meditations. But, resolved to rend asunder the cloud which enveloped him, he started up after sitting for more than an hour in deep reflection, and crossed over to Mrs. Winkle's mansion to seek another interview with Lucy. Having obtained admittance into the hall, he learned from Biddy Boggle that her "missus" was engaged with a Mr. Parke, a friend of Walter's. And in confirmation of the statement, he heard Lucy's voice, repeating the song which had produced such a sensation at her uncle's party. Passing by the parlor door, he sought Mrs. Winkle, whom he found in her usual sitting-room. She received him with her accustomed smile.

"Sit down, Mr. Lowe. Lucy has informed me of your interview at the brook, and that you are acquainted with the fact of her having been captured by the enemy last night."

"It is really so, madam. And I came here to entreat her pardon for the obtuseness—I will not call it doubt—which restrained me from making an attempt to rescue her. Most humbly do I beg her pardon; and you will please inform her of my contrition, and humble petition to be forgiven, if she should persist in prolonging my banishment from her presence."

"Certainly, sir—and I can, besides, assure her that there was a serious earnestness in your aspect and manner. But Lucy intends to banish herself."

"And she has declined imparting to me the place chosen for her seclusion. Perhaps you will be kind enough to inform me?"

"No. I must not interfere. She may have good and sufficient reasons for declining. You have had your mystery—now she has hers. There should be none on either side—

but one will counterpoise the other. Love's comedy of stratagems! I must not interpose to disarrange your plots—only I can warn you that woman's wit is the keenest. Lucy and I have a perfect understanding with each other. She is never to marry without my concurrence, and I am never to attempt to impose on her any choice of mine, contrary to her wishes. But I may say, so far as we can see and know, that is, if there be nothing hidden to create obstacles—it is my opinion that Mr. Lowe, if he should resolutely continue the pursuit, may win the race. But Mr. Lowe must choose his own time to make the requisite explanations, and Miss Lucy must enjoy the same privilege. That is fair, in love. Well? Who's there?" she continued, addressing Biddy, who appeared at the door.

"Biz—Diz—Dill Bizzle, mam."

"Here, Biddy, give him this note. It is for Walter. Tell him to be sure and see him."

"Yes, mam."

"Walter has forgotten the friends who accompanied him from the city."

"And Lucy, I presume, is entertaining one of them during her brother's absence."

"True. It is a sister's duty. And if he should fall in love, it will be no fault of hers."

"You mean if he should *not*," said Lowe, smiling faintly.

"Poets and novelists would persuade the world that such is the character of the sex. It has been a wonder to me, if they possessed such an accurate knowledge of our dispositions, why they are not generally more fortunate in the selections they make themselves. But is not Lucy free?"

"Oh, certainly."

"Then, until the irrevocable words are spoken, take a woman's advice and eschew jealousy. And, really, if Lucy should fortunately meet any one preferable to yourself in her estimation, she must be at liberty to embrace him—I mean to listen to his offer, to hear his account of himself, etc."

"Oh, yes!"

"Well, why sigh about it? But for the purpose of mitigating your despair, I suppose I may be permitted to say that the place which has been selected for Lucy's abode, is not one where it is at all probable she will meet many strangers."

"It is a relief to know that," said Lowe. "I suppose, Mrs.

Winkle," he added, when rising to depart, "Lucy informed you that I had sought a meeting with Roland, and that the result merely exposed his pusillanimity. He threatened to denounce me as a highwayman. I do not fear it. Nor do I fear he will seek to injure Lucy's character. Hence the occurrence of last night may be easily suppressed."

"Roland has written me an apologizing letter. He admits his madness—but says it is the result of love."

"Preserve his letter. He is a villain. His conduct made me forget myself and offer him combat. I do not think I could again be provoked to repeat such an indiscretion, and I fear my conduct on that occasion is not approved by Lucy. Nothing short of defending her honor, could induce me to engage in mortal strife with an enemy, in a country where there are laws to vindicate the injured." Lowe departed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BRIDE TAKING POSSESSION—MISS WILSOME WINKLE RESOLVES TO MARRY.

Walter, after the amusements of the night, slept rather later than usual; and upon making his appearance in the breakfast room, he learned that his uncle and aunt had taken their repast an hour before. But the thoughtful Griselda had kept his coffee hot.

It was just when his breakfast was finished, that Walter espied outside of a window about half of the weather-beaten and war-worn face of Sergeant Blore. His eye was rolling in great excitement, and he secretly beckoned the young man to approach.

When Walter joined the sergeant, the latter led him into a sentry box in the vicinity, and cautioned him not to speak loudly, or make any noise that might attract attention.

"What is it?" asked Walter, in a whisper.

"The emperor has almost abdicated," said Blore, in distressful accents, while his eye was moistened with a tear.

"They call it a treaty—but it is an abdication. I was compelled to sign as a witness."

"What is all this? What have you signed?"

"A capitulation!" continued Blore—"the most humiliating and disgraceful terms!"

"Explain, sergeant, explain."

After many lamentations, the sergeant informed Walter that his uncle had been attacked early in the morning, by the housekeeper and cook, and had fallen back discomfited on his wife, who undertook to afford him security and protection on certain conditions, which had been agreed to, written down, and signed. They were substantially as follows: Mrs. Winkle was to have the purse—Mr. Winkle the sword. In all civil affairs, she was to be supreme—in all military matters he to be the head. And in pursuance of this convention, the keys of the treasury were placed in the custody of Mrs. Winkle, who could at any time discharge the garrison, by withholding the pay and rations! The sergeant, however, foreseeing the possibility of such a contingency, and with a single eye to his own interests, had caused an article to be inserted, that his name should be retained on the pension list during the continuance of his mortal life.

"Three cheers for Gusset!" said Walter.

"No! Hush!" said Blore, placing his hand on the young man's mouth. "She might take umbrage, and I tell you she is the absolute mistress of the establishment. She will be a tyrant—another Catharine. I know a vixen when I see her. Let me tell you a secret. I was married once, and thought some time or other to marry again—but I won't! No! I would rather lose the rest of my limbs. You know Mrs. Edwards?"

"Lowe's scolding old housekeeper?"

"She! That she wolf! I intended to marry her, as a sort of companion for your uncle's spouse. My first wife was a scold—a tigress. Mrs. Edwards loved frogs, and as our tastes were alike, I thought we might agree together. I paid her a visit, and what do you think?"

"I think it a wonder she didn't bite off your nose. But I believe she has no teeth. Didn't she explode like a bomb?"

"No—she screamed, and tried to throw her arms around me!"

"What—the first visit?"

"She had seen me a thousand times before! Mrs. Edwards," continued the sergeant, in a very low whisper, "was Mrs. Blore!"

"Your own wife?"

"True—as I was at Waterloo! I thought her dead—and as my Maker can witness, I hoped so. She thought the same of me, and I have no doubt, hoped the same. One half of me was shot away, and I was reported dead. She married again, and her second husband was drowned, instead of hanged."

"I would have given something to have been present at the meeting," said Walter.

"Oh, I fell down and begged for quarter, which she granted, on condition of a certain indemnity——"

"Wherefore? You were going to marry her as Mrs. Edwards—why not take her as your own wife?"

"I would rather go to the d—l at once! There was always a h—l in my quarters when we lived together. But I don't want to pay the money I promised. She has no right to it. I want you to get me the opinion of a lawyer. You needn't mention names. I have the money. For forty years I have spent nothing, and have been laying up all the time. All I have I will give to you——"

"To *me*, sergeant?"

"Yes, to you—and you will need it, for your aunt here will stop supplies from your uncle's chest—if you will only keep me out of the clutches of that she d—l!"

"I'll send her to the penitentiary for bigamy, if you have no objection."

"Objection? It would be the most glorious news since the emperor's escape from Elba!"

"But you shall keep your money. I will not have it. Enough of these family affairs. I want to try my uncle. I hope he may be reformed, for the doctors say an excessive indulgence in such hallucinations may terminate in confirmed insanity. I am curious to know to what extent he can be influenced by his wife. Have you had the mortar I sent up put in the boat?"

"Yes, and the bombs, too. All is ready. Shall we make the bull bellow?"

"Yes. But how can you do that?"

"By shaking a piece of red flannel on one side of the Channel."

"Then go about it. I will be with my uncle in his cabinet when the messenger arrives."

When Walter joined his uncle, the latter was finishing the perusal of Alison's account of the camp at Boulogne. He closed the book with a sigh, and said:

"I fear the days of glory are over. What a spectacle it must have been to see such an array of military strength assembled in view of the cliffs of England! And the profound dissimulation of that unequalled genius! No one suspecting the point where the blow would fall! All supposing it was really his intention to imitate Cæsar in a descent upon the coast!"

"His was undoubtedly the greatest genius the world ever produced," said Walter.

"True, Walter; and I have often sat upon my horse and fancied I saw how his victories were won, and enjoyed his triumphs. But I fear I have indulged too much in such mere fancies. Griselda says so—and she says, moreover, the people insinuate that my mind is partially deranged. It is not so. Nevertheless, my own people act sometimes as if I were an idiot, and would suffer any indignity. Think of their rudeness last night! My wedding night! But your aunt shall punish them as they deserve. She is a sensible woman, Walter; be kind to her. I have placed great power in her hands."

"She and I were always good friends, uncle. But, sir, have you seen the mortar I sent you?"

"Not yet; I ordered it to be put in the gunboat cruising in the Channel, and did intend to go on board before breakfast. But you know how I was disturbed last night, and I slept later this morning than usual. Griselda, though, was up before the lark, and wheedled me out of my purpose. What brought *you* here?" he continued, addressing Blore's messenger, who came bowing into the room.

"The bull is bellowing, sir, with his face towards the camp, and he's pawing up the ground, and lashing about with his tail."

"I'll go! Tell Blore to man the gunboat. Come, Walter, we'll have you along, to witness the performance of the mor-

tar. We'll have a cruise in the Channel, and a few shots at John Bull."

Walter followed his uncle into the orchard, and in the direction of the camp of Boulogne. When they entered the garrison, they were hailed by enthusiastic huzzas, and Walter saw the red flannel (it was a shirt) which had exasperated the bull, thrust quickly under a gun.

The provocation removed, Johnny returned quietly to his browsing, notwithstanding the presence of his chiefest enemy. Then the old commander and Walter, followed by the allotted crew, entered the gunboat, in which the mortar had been placed, and began to cruise in the Channel. Every now and then the mortar was discharged, throwing wooden balls which had been picked up in dilapidated ten-pin alleys. They were watched in their courses, and marked where they fell, to be used again. Walter and the sergeant had likewise prepared some bags of sand, with powder and fuses, to explode in the air.

Thus they amused themselves, until the gunner, neglecting to elevate the piece sufficiently, one of the balls taking a horizontal direction, struck the orchard fence at a weak point and prostrated it. Immediately the whole herd of cows and giddy heifers passed through the breach and ran down to the margin of the water, while the old bull, on the opposite side of the Channel, lifted his head and muttered something deep and low, which they seemed to understand, although it was incomprehensible to the men. But they were soon made to understand the meaning of such communication, for the cattle, after slaking their thirst, plunged forward and swam over to the green island.

"Treason!" cried Napoleon—"they are going over to the enemy! Fire at the bull, and row ahead of the deserters!"

He was obeyed. A sand bag bomb exploded over the head of Johnny, but did not seem to intimidate him. He ran into the water and drove back the boat, the oarsmen declining a collision with him, and enabled the cows and heifers to land without further opposition, and when upon his territory they evinced much joy by playful gambols and fantastic feats of agility.

In vain did the men endeavor to effect a landing at the various accessible points. No sooner did they approach the soil, than the bull charged them, and drove them back into the

waves. Once he succeeded in getting one of his feet in the boat, and came near sinking it. At another time he tore off a portion of the gunwale with his horn, and caused such a body of water to flow in, that the powder was spoilt, and of course the gun was silenced. Then the men were ordered to withdraw from the hostile coast.

But the enemy, not satisfied with repelling the assailants, pursued them in terror. The blood of the bull was up. He plunged forward with the determination to annihilate his tormentors.

"Row! row!" cried Napoleon, "or we shall be drowned."

The oarsmen required no peremptory order to exert themselves. The case was an urgent one, and they had quite as much at stake as their commander. They plied themselves, therefore, with all their powers of propulsion, and steered for the battery, from which discharges were fired in quick succession at the undaunted pursuers.

"Put in ball! fire metal!" cried Napoleon. But they had no balls, fortunately, for they might have shattered the boat to atoms, and involved friends and foes in one common fate. As it was, the burning wadding of the cannon fell in the boat, and would certainly have ignited the powder, and blown them up, had it not been dissolved in the water.

At length, when the boat approached the muzzles of the guns, the bull curved gracefully round and swam back to the cows and heifers, and just as they began to exhibit symptoms of a disposition to follow him.

When the discomfited party sprang out upon land, Walter was met by the faithful messenger, Bill Dizzle, and received the note sent by his mother. He stepped apart to peruse it, while his uncle fell asleep reclining against the root of an apple tree, so completely had he been overcome by exhaustion.

Meantime Mrs. Griselda Winkle had not been idle. After the departure of her lord, she sent for the housekeeper, to attend her in a sort of royal progress through the apartments.

"Mercy on me!" she exclaimed, when the door of the sergeant's room was thrown open. "Why this looks like a prison-room, Mrs. Acrid!"

"Good enough for the old owl," was the reply.

"But not good housekeeping, Mrs. Acrid. I have been accustomed to see my rooms kept clean and sweet——"

"Sweet! I don't know how you'd go about making that old beast's room sweet. I have to hold my nose every time I come into it. You might as well talk about making a skunk's bed sweet."

"Mrs. Acrid, we will confer more particularly about that presently," said Griselda, proceeding next to the chamber Walter had occupied. "Bless me!" she continued, "the bed has not yet been made up."

"Nobody will want it before night. There is no need for being in a hurry," was the reply of the sullen housekeeper.

"Worse still!" cried Griselda, when they entered the chamber she had occupied herself. "Every thing just as I left it! The bed not made—the floor not swept—the basins and jugs not emptied——"

"Certainly they ain't, mam! That's what I was talking to Mr. Winkle about this morning."

"You were talking to *him* about it?"

"To be sure. I wanted to know if you wasn't to keep your own room in order."

"And what did he say?"

"He said he'd speak to you."

"He did."

"Well. Then I suppose you know why your room is in the pickle you put it in. And it won't do to empty the things out of the window, I never did so, and I've been keeping this house twenty years."

"Mrs. Acrid!"

"Well, mam!"

"What do you suppose will be you duties hereafter?"

"Duties! I've always done what I pleased, and when it was convenient, and I never had such sour looks before. If any change is to be made, *I* am the one to make it. I will leave. I gave him warning this morning. My month's up to-morrow."

"There *will* be a change, Mrs. Acrid. When servants hire themselves for wages, they must perform their duties—"

"Servants!" screamed Mrs. Acrid, throwing up her hands.

"Servants!" echoed the mulatto cook, who had been watching and listening.

"Certainly—servants. Are not wages paid you for performing certain services?"

"I never before heard any body in this house called a servant!" said the housekeeper.

"Nor I nother! *I* won't be called one!" said the cook, exhibiting her bust a moment, propped by her arms akimbo, and then disappearing, and retreating towards the kitchen, slamming all the doors after her.

"Who was that?" demanded the pale imperturbable Griselda.

"The cook. But she'll cook no more in this house, if she's to be called a servant. If you want her to stay, you'd better take back your words, and apologize. I won't stay either, if you don't apologize to me. Nobody will stay to be called a *servant*, by one who was once an apprentice, and afterwards a milliner, who done her own cleaning, and emptying and filling! You should recollect that, mam, if you want to live pleasantly in this house."

"Mrs Acrid," said Griselda, her white lips quivering, and at the same time holding her purse with difficulty in her trembling hand—"what wages do you receive?"

"I get compensation, mam—sometimes they call it salary. The last time I threatened to leave, Mr. Winkle put it up from eight to ten dollars a month. He soon found he couldn't do without me!"

"Here are ten dollars. Pack up your things and be off as soon as you can!"

"Me! I—I—I'll see you in Jericho first!"

"No impudence! You have your wages. Go! Mr. Buck, the constable, is below awaiting my orders. If you make any disturbance, or refuse to obey, I will have you arrested and sent to prison."

"Me! sent to prison?"

"Yes, you—for stealing your master's spoons. The robbery last year has been traced to you, instead of the soldiers. Do you recollect a certain Abraham Laban, a Jew?"

"Lord 'ave mercy on me!" cried Mrs. Acrid, falling down on her knees. "Oh, mam, have pity on a poor old helpless woman, and save her from disgrace!"

"If you depart peaceably, you shall not be molested. You have stolen enough since you have been here to keep you from want. Go, and enjoy it if you can. In fifteen minutes you must be out of the house—and mind! if you carry away

any thing not your own, you shall answer for all your thefts. There is an eye upon you. You are watched."

Then Griselda descended to the kitchen, where she found the cook tossing the pots and pans about in most reckless confusion.

"Well, cook," said she, smiling sardonically, "I have finished with the housekeeper. I must now have an understanding with you."

"That's not my name!" said the cook, whirling round and facing Griselda with a fierceness designed for intimidation.

"What is your name?"

"Amanda Ann."

"Very well. But why do you keep the kitchen in such bad order? The floor is covered with litter and filthy rags, and none of the vessels are clean. All the tin is rusty and black——"

"La, mam, nobody has a right to come in the kitchen to criticise things! Who ever heard of the like! I'm mistress here—and if I'm to be interfered with, I'll pack up my duds and leave—that's what I'll do!"

"I'm mistress over all—all the rest are my servants"

"I'm nobody's servant! I'd starve first. I've cooked in the richest families in the city, and have never been called a servant. And what's more, the ladies of the houses—and they *were* ladies, too—never came meddling with my business. I won't stand it! You may get somebody else that will—but I won't!"

"How much is due you?"

"Two months. You needn't turn up your nose at them frogs——"

"Throw them away. I will have no more frogs cooked. If Blore won't eat chickens, he may fast."

"I shall do no such thing!"

"I will, then!" and Griselda, snatched up the tongs and cast the frogs into the slop barrel. "Here are your wages," she continued. "You must leave immediately. After hearing your impudence, and running the condition of things in this place, I would not for the world eat a dinner of your cooking."

"*My* cooking! You! You, who have lived on potato parings and tripe!"

"Go! Mr. Buck the constable is waiting in the next room.

If you do not depart quietly, I will make him arrest you for stealing your master's chickens. You can no longer sell the poultry, and subsist the rest on frogs. Mr. Buck says you have been sending him chickens and butter for several years—and he thought Mr. Winkle had the money. I could send you to the penitentiary."

"I beg pardon, mam! Don't have me taken up, if you please! I'll do any thing you want me!"

"Then leave the premises in ten minutes."

Griselda had no Mr. Buck in the next room; but she had held several conferences with that astute functionary before her marriage, and had obtained valuable information from him. He had been her next door neighbor, and promised very readily to become an auxiliary. He was from the land of steady habits and the clime of keen perceptions. The bride's antecedents he would know nothing about, if her future could be made advantageous to himself. But if there was no Mr. Buck in the next room, there was a housekeeper and a cook of Griselda's own choosing, whom she had provided for such a contingency as had just happened. She now joined them and related what had occurred, to their infinite satisfaction. And when the old domestics had departed, with their trunks preceding them in a cart, the creatures of the mistress emerged from their hiding-place in great glee, and entered with alacrity upon the discharge of their duties.

Then Griselda retired to her chamber and arrayed herself in one of the splendid and costly dresses she had secretly provided for such an occasion. Little did Miss Wilsome Winkle suppose, when she slighted the retired milliner, in the fashionable street of Philadelphia, that the pale creature, humble and obscure as she seemed, was at that moment meditating one of the most lofty triumphs of woman's ambition. Long before that day had the quiet milliner designed to become the bride of Napoleon Winkle. She had studied his character, and ascertained that the accomplishment of such a project was easily practicable. Therefore, having every thing in readiness, the demure Gusset, when so unceremoniously dismissed, as she interpreted it, from the mansion of the rich and aristocratic old maid, walked deliberately forth, with the firm purpose of having the wedding consummated without further delay. And it was a matter of secret exultation that she was enabled to settle

the matter definitively the very next day, and that, too, almost in the presence of the high-bred Wilsome.

Of course the retired milliner had not forgotten any of the requisite adornments of the bride. It had been her vocation to furnish the most beautiful habiliments for others, and there could be no reason why she should not provide fitting apparel for herself. Hence, not only her wedding garments, but her second and third day dresses, were all in readiness before the time was settled for the nuptials.

When Griselda descended to the hall, she was met by her husband and Walter.

"My beautiful bride!" exclaimed Napoleon, "I must have a salute at parting, for I see the coach is awaiting you."

"How you are bespattered with mud!" said Griselda, after receiving the kiss, and glancing at the soiled exterior of her lord.

"The infernal Eng—no—my dear, the bull. He attempted to effect a landing, for the purpose of storming the batteries and spiking our cannon—but—but did not succeed. When will you return?"

"To dinner, at four o'clock. I must hasten to explain to our friends why you have deemed it proper to dispense with the ordinary etiquette——"

"Do. Say it was my will—and that I preferred the society of my wife to a mob of other people's wives and daughters. Will you not take Walter with you? He has been sent for by his mother, and must go, I suppose, although I shall miss him."

The chief then bowed with dignity, and strode into his cabinet, while Walter conducted his aunt to the carriage, which he was surprised to find had been furbished up exceedingly. The horses, four blacks, were in glittering harness, and the coachman wore a hatband of gold lace, and large silver buttons on his coat.

"This is comfortable, Gus——" began Walter.

"Gusset no more, Walter," replied she quickly, placing her magnificent fan against his lips. "But it is comfortable, as I intended it should be. I will be comfortable and happy the balance of my days. And all those who have sneered at the humble Gusset, because she was once a milliner, shall see and feel my importance."

"Don't put on airs, Gusset—when we are alone, you must

allow me to call you by your old familiar name. But don't hold your head too high in Aunt Wilsome's presence, or my mother's. The fortune uncle Napoleon has, you know, came from my grandfather, and should not be used as a means of piquing any of the family. We were of the aristocracy, Gusset, and you know that you can have no such claims to consideration."

"I am as good as most of the proud people of Babbleton. They made their fortunes in the shop, or their parents did before them. Fortune is every thing, as I have observed all my life. And now my fortune is made."

"Very true. But you should be kind, charitable, and generous; and not make use of the power you derive from my uncle, to resent affronts given to the milliner."

"I am old enough to know my duty, and shall have the resolution to perform it. I would be pleased to have the friendship of my husband's family; but I can scarce hope for it. Your uncle loves you as a son, and you have always been a pet of mine. You could do nothing to offend him, irreconcilably, and I would bear much from you. Yet, Walter, let me warn you not to join my enemies in their enterprises against me. Be my friend, and you will reap advantages from it. You may lose the friendship of your proud aunt in the city, but you will have mine. And rely upon it, as your enemy, you would have more to fear from me than her. Recollect that you are poor——"

"Say no more about that!" replied Walter, angrily. "I have been thinking several times of the consequences of this marriage, and am just beginning to realize them. I have been too thoughtless. Why did you wish to marry my uncle? You, an old maid, and he an old man! If I had had my wits about me, I should have prevented it!"

"You might have prevented it. You are the only one who could have prevented it. But my wit was the most available. Let us now understand each other, and act in concert. I know your power with your uncle, and you know mine. You might produce discord, but hardly a separation. I might procure your banishment, but it would alienate the affection of my husband."

"There need be no difficulty. You have only to be kind and respectful to our family. My mother always liked you—but she never dreamed you ambitious or vindictive. There

will be no change in us, unless there is in you. But you must not restrain my uncle unreasonably—that is, you must not seek to balk his good intentions towards his family. Act thus, and you may be happy, and we contented."

"It will be a hard task. However, I shall not be the first to commence hostilities. But I will put up with nothing from the rest, that I can put down."

"A pun, Gusset. But here we are, entering the town, with the whole population staring at us. Where will you stop first?—at our house?"

"No. At the Arums. Mrs. Arum was at your uncle's mansion—your mother did not come."

"The deuce!"

"It is not to resent your mother's absence—but to gratify the Arums. Before we part, Walter, I have one thing further to say. Previous to my marriage, Mr. Roland did every thing he could to accomplish my wishes. In return, I never omitted an opportunity of recommending him to Lucy. Whatever may occur between them hereafter, always remember I had in view nothing but what I deemed an honorable and advantageous match. I used Roland as one of my instruments, while he vainly supposed I was an instrument of his. I believe now, that he has no idea of matrimony; and if what I have heard be true, he is a bad man—a dangerous man—and I feel it my duty to warn you against him. Lucy needs no warning, for she always disliked him. I shall cut him, and defy his worst. He may say he helped to make the match—but I shall laugh at the boast, knowing it will never reach the ears of your uncle."

Walter then sprang out and hastened to his mother's mansion, while the proud dame descended in all her glory at the door of the Arums, which was thrown open to receive her. Mrs Arum embraced the now great lady. A week before, she would not have been seen speaking to her in public. Her daughters were entertaining Mr. Snobson with all their might at the piano, playing and singing, while Mr. S. leaned upon the corner of the instrument in a trance.

But all of them surrounded Mrs Griselda in the parlor, and uttered felicitations. Mr Snobson inquired after Miss Lucy, who, he said, had created quite a sensation with her voice, and might do well on the stage. If she had any disposition to make a fortune in that way, he thought he had influ-

ence sufficient to procure her an engagement, and interest enough with the press to secure her a fine reception.

"Do you mean Lucy Winkle?" asked Griselda, who entertained the most friendly feelings for her husband's niece.

"I heard she was poor, and I thought it a pity for one of her thrilling powers of voice to remain in obscurity. She is not so perfect as some I know in her performance," he continued, with a significant glance at the pleased sisters; "but she sings with effect. It is a pity she is not in society."

Griselda made no reply to the coxcomb, but answered the shower of questions asked by the admiring ladies, who were in high delight upon learning that the bride had done them the honor to pay them the first visit. After mutually exhausting their vocabulary of endearing epithets, Griselda arose, and was assisted into her coach by no less an attendant than Mr. Snobson himself, amidst the admiring gaze of the people in the street, and the sarcasms of the neighbors peeping from the windows. The parentage and wealth of Snobson being already known in the village, it was no small distinction for the retired milliner to be waited on by him.

The next place at which the coach stopped was in front of the Crudle mansion. Here, too, a rapturous greeting was received by the bride. The old lady and her daughters, who had been expecting the visitor, ran down the marble steps and assisted Griselda to descend, while Mr. Fibber, whose shop was in the vicinity, held open the door of the coach. Fibber had once refused to credit Gusset for a few yards of dimity—but this was Mrs. Winkle, the spouse of one of the largest landed proprietors in the country.

"We've been playing all the morning for Mr. Parke," said Miss Susan, when they were seated in the parlor.

"We think him a delightful young gentleman," said Miss Sally.

"He's altogether of a different cast from Snobson," said Mrs. Crudle; "for I've heard my husband say that old Snobson, the father of this young man, used to run about the streets shaving the paper of merchants for the capitalists, and received a commission for performing the dirty work." Snobson had neglected the Crudles.

"I thought Virginia Oakdale would have been at your delicious party," said Miss Susan.

"I begged her to come up," said Griselda; "but I did not hint what was going to happen."

"Oh, then she wasn't invited!" said Miss Sally, tossing her curls aside. "But do you think she is to be married to Walter Winkle, now?"

"I did not know they were ever engaged," said Griselda, suggestively.

"Nobody *knew* it," said the other; "but every body suspected it. Of course it can't take place now, since he has no prospect of a fortune."

"And then, poor Lucy," said her sister, "what will become of her? Mr. Roland, I am sure, never had any serious intention of marrying her. And as for the stranger, Mr. Lowe, I hope she won't be fool enough to throw herself away on one who may be, for what any body knows to the contrary, a refugee from justice."

"Fugitive, my child," said her mother.

Griselda really possessed a superior mind to the rich parvenues who had long looked down upon her with disdain, and she was not slow to perceive, being now elevated to their level in the estimation of the world, that no difficult task would be imposed on her in the maintenance of her new position.

She drove next to the widow Winkle's, and was received in the usual manner. There may have been more than usual interest evinced in her reception, but there was no bustle, no parade, no adulation.

Colonel Oakdale and young Parke were in the parlor, and they uttered their congratulations without irony, and without the warmth of expression which seeks to win the favor of a great personage. Griselda now felt that she was in the presence of her superiors, and sought to make no display. She even looked with pain, at the fine clothes she wore, and which had so completely dazzled the Arums and the Crudles. No one asked her the price paid for her jewels, no one lauded the imposing ostentation of her equipage.

On the contrary, when Walter came in from the post office with a letter in his hand, the bride ceased to share the attention of the company.

"Why do you smile, Walter?" asked the widow, seeing her son was amused.

"I have a letter from Aunt Wilsome—a characteristic one, and that, you know, would make any body laugh."

"I hope it contains no secrets," said the colonel, "so that I may have the pleasure of hearing it read."

"But it does, though," said Walter, "and must not be read in public, at least a portion of it."

Griselda, supposing that her wedding would be referred to in no flattering terms by the old maid, cast an imploring look at Walter, who understood its meaning.

"Since it has become fashionable for old bucks of my years to marry," said the colonel, winking at Griselda," I think I must fall in too. And I don't know a better match for me than Miss Wilsome Winkle."

After the laughter which followed the serious expressions of the colonel, while delivering his speech, had subsided, Walter remarked that he was very sorry the colonel had not announced his intention a few days sooner.

"Why so, sir?" demanded the colonel. "Is your aunt so beset with admirers that a few days sooner or later can make any difference in one's prospects?"

"I am sorry to say they can. My aunt has selected another."

"Walter!" cried his mother and sister.

"It is true. She is to be married; she says so herself, and does not impose secrecy on me."

After this announcement Griselda departed, and was conducted to the carriage by the gallant colonel, who, however, returned to speak with Walter.

"Are you really serious?" he asked, on re-entering, and seeing the widow and Lucy eagerly perusing the letter.

"Never more so in my life, I assure you. And now that my other aunt has left us, perhaps my mother will not object to having the letter read aloud for the entertainment of the company."

"By no means, Walter," said the widow. "But it is true, sir; she announces her purpose of marrying."

"I am sorry for it upon my life," said the colonel, "for I hoped her fortune without obstruction or encumbrance would descend to Walter and his sister. Surely the old folks are as mad as Napoleon Winkle's bull. When do you visit the city, Walter?"

"To-morrow, sir."

"Then bring home Virginia. Tell her I am getting fretful, living alone. And remember to prepare your speech for

the great meeting. I will have all the rich men of the county there, and we'll see if we can't surfeit these fierce reformers. Good day."

After the colonel had departed the widow and Lucy retired for a brief space to peruse the letter more carefully. It was truly a characteristic one. "Isolated," she said, "from all family connections, influences and endearments, by the late ill-assorted and most disgraceful match, which I alone denounced, there is no other alternative but for me to establish new connections, and to seek other associates, who will better appreciate the importance of family standing, and more rigidly conform to the rules and requirements of good society. I shall therefore turn my back upon all my kindred, and cease to know any of those who approved or sanctioned my brother's foolish marriage with that impudent hussy. My deceased brother, your noble father, had, I think, the largest share of my father's fortune, and I suppose your mother is amply provided with money—although I don't pretend to know any thing about such matters. I can't tell what I possess myself, and never bother my head about it. I suppose if one has a fortune, and don't throw it away, it still remains. I have not thrown mine away, and never will. If your mother has dissipated hers, she was a fool for it, and should suffer for her folly. I hope the impudent Gusset will scatter *her* fraudulently acquired fortune, and so lead my silly brother Napoleon to repentance. I hope she will lead him by the nose.

"If I see so plainly the imprudence of such disgraceful matches in others, you may suppose I shall be careful to avoid falling into the like silly practices myself. It is true I intend to marry. My nuptials will be celebrated some time during the present year. But the man of my choice will be a gentleman of distinction—a genius of celebrity. You know him, Walter—Mr. Pollen, the poet. If he is poor—if he has been sometimes, as you informed me, without a shirt—that is no disgrace. How was it with Chatterton, Defoe, and even Milton himself? And what lady in the world would not have been honored by being the wife of a Chatterton, a Defoe, a Milton? Shame upon the ladies who permitted them to languish in poverty! I will set an example for the wealthy ladies to follow hereafter. Genius is the very highest kind of aristocracy, because it cannot be conferred by mortal man, nor taken away even by the detracting tongue of women. Fare-

well. Present my adieus to your mother and Lucy. We will not meet again, unless it be accidentally, and then it is probable there will be no recognition on my part, and I desire there shall be none on yours. You may say to Mr. Lowe that a visit from him would be agreeable to me I believe him to be a gentleman, and would have no objections to his society, if he could answer one or two questions satisfactorily. You may say to him that although I am resolved to marry, I don't expect to feel what the silly girls call a romantic passion for any man. I don't believe in any such nonsense. I want a partner at whist as much as any thing else.

"And now, I care nothing for what the world may say. I despise the world, as a Christian should.

"Your Aunt,
"WILSOME WINKLE.

"P. S. I have, since writing the above, received one of the most beseeching letters I ever read in my life from Ralf Roland. He begs me to conciliate Lucy in his behalf. Roland is rich, and may be a congressman. What does Lucy want? Tell her *I* approve the match. It is true Roland's father came dangling around me when I was a simpering miss, and I believe my father kicked him out of doors, for some nonsense or other, I never knew exactly what, and was too young to understand the meaning at the time. But he was a fine personable man, and rich—and I am sure your grandfather must have been difficult to please. It it true Roland was a rake—but any wife of spirit ought to be able to correct that. It is besides a vice peculiar to the aristocracy. Tell Lucy, if she will be sociable with Roland, and hear my speeches in his favor, she may come to my house and remain as a favored niece until her decision is formed. If she marries Roland, she will afterwards have access to my society. If not, she can return and be henceforth a stranger.

"Farewell,
"W. W.

"P. P. S. While writing the last line, a decayed tooth in my under jaw broke off, and all the rest fell out. You see how they blotted the paper. I must go to the dentist and have the root extracted—and I must not go alone. Come

down immediately, Walter, and accompany me. You will be my guest as formerly until I am done with you.

"W. W."

Mrs. Winkle laughed heartily at the letter, while Lucy was vexed and thoughtful.

In the parlor, George Parke was entertaining Walter with an account of Snobson's dereliction, which was in part owing to the deteriorating insinuations of the Arums and Crudles.

"Lucy won't grieve. She saw to the bottom of his shallow pate at a glance," said Walter. "But if he repeats any of the slanders of the Arums——"

"He will be careful not to do that," said Parke, "for he is continually hoping you will not take offence, and begging me to explain and apologize for him. But he is high in favor with the sisters. In their eagerness to captivate him, I saw them pouting and making mouths at each other. No doubt when alone they pull each other's hair. Poor Snobson! they'll sing him and talk him to death; and if they should require any assistance their mother will aid them. I don't think he can escape."

"I hope not," said Walter, seriously. "But how did the Crudles serve you?"

"Oh, they found out that my grandfather was Vice President of the United States, and my father a Senator in Congress, and they seemed to be enchanted. I was perfumed with their curls, dazzled with their diamonds, and ravished with the beauty of the worked borders of their petticoats, of which I had continued glimpses. They know exactly when I will graduate, and having unwittingly told them my age upon entering college, they have calculated how old I will be when I leave it."

"Ha! ha! ha! Poor fellow!"

"I can't decide which is the most agreeable; and you know I can't have them both, unless I join the Mormons. Oh, you would laugh to hear them ridicule the Snobsons! Their own pa, they say, is vastly richer than the broker, and will some day do nothing but live on the interest of his money. Poor creatures! They need not fear but they can have husbands. Their attractions will secure them lovers. I hope they may find honest men, who will take care of the wealth their enterprising father amassed in the shop."

Walter's mother and sister interrupted the conversation at this point. And in reply to an inquiry from the former, Walter announced his determination to visit the city that evening—not so much, as he confessed, to oblige his aunt, as to comply with the order of Colonel Oakdale. And both he and George Parke set out for the city in the late boat.

CHAPTER XV.

WALTER'S CURIOUS QUARREL WITH VIRGINIA—A STROLL WITH THE POET—THE JEW—LOVE AND LAUGHTER—THE DENTIST.

Upon reaching the city Walter and his young friend proceeded first to the residence of Dr. Nitre, as the most attractive point, and not doubting that Miss Wilsome would remain in tact until the former should find it convenient to wait upon her. The latter had determined to depart in the evening train for the college, where he learned there were letters awaiting him, and he desired to pay his respects to the young ladies before setting out. And Walter wished his attendance so that Julia might be entertained while he conferred with Virginia, whose failure to write him as usual, and as had been agreed upon between them, rendered him apprehensive that something injurious to his interests had occurred during his absence.

When they were ushered into the parlor, they found only the doctor and his good lady, who had just been engaged in one of those little episodes in married life, called family quarrels, which will still happen occasionally in the best regulated establishments.

"Oh, I'm glad to see you!" cried Mrs. Nitre. Your arrival is most opportune."

"Hush, madam!" said the doctor, aside, after heartily shaking the hands of the young men.

"No—no, doctor," continued she, "I want the young gentlemen to know what a singular, selfish, abstracted man you are."

"Deuce take her!" whispered Walter, "she's abusing her husband again before her guests!"

"Just think of it!" said she—"Here we have had Virginia, I don't know how long, and no party—no visitors! And Dr. Nitre's practice worth five thousand dollars per annum! No one visits us. No respect is paid to our niece, and simply because the doctor won't encourage people to come."

"My dear, I forget every thing else when treating my patients."

"That's it! he confesses his culpable neglect. Don't you think it a great shame, Walter?"

"No, upon my word! I am not at all sorry to hear Virginia has been secluded from society."

"I'll tell her! But *you* agree with me, don't you Mr. Parke?"

"Most certainly, madam."

"I thought so! Now, Dr. Nitre—well! he's gone!" The doctor had slipped away, winking at Walter.

"May we not have the pleasure of seeing the ladies?" asked Walter. "I hope they are at home."

"Oh yes. Of course they are at home. They would never be guilty of paying the first visit! Did you come in your aunt's carriage. If so we'll have a nice moonlight drive, and make the doctor take his tea alone. No? I'm sorry for it. But we shall have a promenade. I'll send down the girls immediately."

Shortly after Mrs. Nitre's departure Virginia and Julia appeared—the latter in gay spirits—the other rather grave. But as had been agreed upon between the young men, Julia's attention was at this time engrossed by the southern student, and Walter succeeded in detaching Virginia from her cousin.

"I have not received a letter since we parted," said Walter, in a low voice.

"For the reason that it was not written," was replied promptly, if not pettishly.

"But was there any good reason for not writting? I am sure I wrote twice. I hope they were received."

"They were received, sir. Here they are, unopened." And she placed them in his hand.

"Virginia! What have I done to deserve this?"

"Enough."

"And will you not tell me?"

"Have you not been in the habit of exhibiting my letters, and even giving them away?"

"No! Upon my soul, I have never been guilty of any such baseness."

"I suppose it would be denied. But what is a mere denial——"

"I'll swear to it——"

"No—don't! Pause. I say what is a denial, or even an oath, against the evidence of one's own eyes?"

"Your own eyes! Virginia——"

"Call me Miss Oakdale, Mr. Winkle."

"If any other person's eyes were to bear such testimony, I would pronounce them false, perfidious, perjured——"

"Stop, sir! We'll see. Another person's eyes shall bear witness with mine. I suppose you will believe your own eyes. Here," she continued, drawing another letter from her pocket —"here is one of my letters, which I received from the hands of a certain young lady, with whom I am informed you have but a slight acquaintance. Do you recognize it?"

Walter gazed in utter astonishment at the familiar superscription.

"I would forswear my own eyes," said he, "if they alone beheld it. But, Virginia——"

"Miss Oakdale, Mr. Winkle," she interposed.

"But there is some mystery here, which must be explained. I never, so help me Heaven, gave that letter to any young lady, or to any one else. I thought it was locked up at home——"

"Oh yes! And you asserted that they were kept near to your heart!"

"It must have been so! It must have dropped from my breast."

"Then it was time to cease writing to so careless a correspondent. But there is no proof that you lost it; and you must pardon me for demanding a satisfactory explanation. I had it from the hands of a young lady who came for the purpose of returning it to me. I did not know her. She did not stay to be interrogated. That is all *I* know. You should know the rest."

"I know no more of that young lady, or how she obtained the letter, unless she picked it up in the street—or robbed my escritoire—than—than——"

"Whom? you are at a loss for a figure of speech. But no matter. You will have an abundance of leisure to investi-

gate the subject. In the mean time write me no more letters, but return those received from me."

"Are you serious, Virginia?"

"Miss Oakdale, Mr. Winkle; I am, and if you do not obey me, I will never speak to you again."

"You will let me have them again, if the unlucky appearance of this one be satisfactorily accounted for?"

"I promise nothing. Then I shall not be obnoxious to the charge of falsehood. Expect nothing, and you cannot be unpleasantly disappointed. Be satisfied that I permit you to attempt a vindication."

"But in the mean time——"

"All is suspended."

"But your father directed me to conduct you home."

"He shall be obeyed. When do we set out?"

"I can't say, until I see my aunt who sent for me."

"If she sent for you, why did you come here first?"

"I loved you more than my duty——"

"I believed you once."

"And I wanted an explanation of the cause why you had not written."

"You have it. Now go. I will explain to my aunt She takes it for granted you will remain, and will insist upon it if she sees you again. When you are ready to return to Babbleton call for me—not before."

"Walter," said Parke, rising, and looking at his watch, "I must go, or the cars will leave me. I will, if possible, run down to the village next week to hear your speech."

"And *I* should like to hear it," said Julia, exchanging glances with Parke.

"You are to return with me, you know," said Virginia, "and aunt is to spend a week at Cape May."

The young gentlemen departed, one for the depot, the other for the Winkle mansion.

Walter was admitted just as his aunt and her affianced, Mr Pollen, were sitting down to tea. His aunt, dressed in her usual fantastical style, applauded his promptitude of obedience, and said she had not expected his arrival before the next morning But she was glad to see so ready a response to her summons. Pollen greeted his young friend very cordially, and thanked him for the loan of his shirt, adding that he was now provided with an abundance of his own. He then repeat-

ed to Miss Wilsome, the particulars of their nocturnal adventure at the Jew's den, at which she laughed very heartily.

"Such incidents in the lives of men of genius," said Wilsome, "are the most interesting portions of their history. And I shall insist upon having your biography, dictated by yourself. I will hire an amanuensis for that purpose."

Pollen bowed in grateful acknowledgment, and really considered the words she had spoken, when he thought of the position and the wealth of the person uttering them, as one of the most felicitous speeches which had ever been addressed to him, and if such a thing had been possible, he would doubtless have fallen in love with her.

"Employ me, aunt," said Walter. "I am idle, and want something to do. Indeed I *must* do something to make a living."

"To make a living! Your father's fortune was ample. He couldn't take it with him. Pooh—nonsense—the Winkles are rich. Nevertheless, if you should be competent, and would undertake the task——"

"I will answer for my ability to do him justice," said Walter—"and my lively and discriminating aunt shall figure advantageously in the work. Oh, you shall be handed down to posterity!"

"And she shall be!" said Pollen, his fine pale face beaming with animation. "Authors are generally poor. They live in poverty, and die in destitution. Then the literary scavengers pick their rags from the gutter, and thousands with more dollars than brains are startled at the tale of their indigence and suffering, and lament they had not met with and relieved them, and thus linked their names with immortality. They too, die—they *must* die—and I fear they are d——d. But they are not remembered by the next generation, while the works of the starved, the contemned, the insulted poet, are decked in gilt morocco, and placed upon the gorgeous centre-tables of the rich and the fashionable! Yes, Miss Winkle, your name, as one of the discerning few, will not be swallowed up in the dark jaws of unrelenting oblivion. They may call you eccentric, imprudent, mad, if they please, but you possessed the noble generosity, the divine impulse of charity, to relieve the distress of one whose works have been pronounced the emanations of genius. No, madam! In future years, whenever the name of Harold Pollen is

mentioned, yours will be referred to as the angel in human form who rescued him from destruction. Recollect what was said of Homer:—

"'Seven Grecian cities strove for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.'"

Walter watched his aunt closely. There was a twinkle of the eye which portended a tear, and he had often heard it said that she was incapable of shedding one. She lifted her handkerchief with the utmost care, and applied it slightly to the lower lash, and above the paint. But the spasmodic quiver satisfied him that she was not devoid of noble emotions.

"That speech," said Walter, "shall be interpolated in the book."

"I see you are laughing at me, Walter!" said his aunt "So, for fear that some of your own nonsense may be added, I shall look over the proof-sheets myself."

"Why, aunt, I understand they are to be his posthumous memoirs; and you can have no reasonable expectation of surviving him."

"She may," said Pollen; "it would be no unreasonable expectation. I have seen my end. It is not in the distant future."

"Pooh! Nonsense! Change the subject," said Miss Wilsome. "How dare you start such a dismal topic, Walter? Sip your tea sir, and then if nothing else occurs, we will have a rubber."

"Not to-night, aunt. Mr. Pollen and I have an appointment——"

"So we have," said the poet, quickly. "But we will endeavor to be back in time for a game."

"If you have an appointment, it must be kept," said Miss Wilsome, "and I presume it is not my privilege to demand the nature of it, or to suggest that it might be postponed."

"It might be postponed," said Walter, "if I were not compelled to return to Babbleton before another night."

"Why are you compelled to return?" asked his aunt.

"Because I promised Col. Oakdale to conduct Virginia home to-morrow, if you did not see proper to detain me longer."

"Perhaps I will see proper to do so. So you may be here

another night, if I desire it. But you will not take Virginia back with you."

"Why, aunt?"

"I won't tell you—just now. I may, if you return in time. Oh it was a fine adventure. I found it out, sir! Take care of your hair, when you meet Virginia. I warn you against her talons. I could dispel the mystery, however, and enable you to explain satisfactorily. But if she laughed as heartily as I have done, there might be danger of a rupture of a blood-vessel."

"Aunt!" said Walter, "I will remain, if——"

"Go about your business! I don't believe you have any other engagement than a desire to smoke a cigar. Go—and make haste back."

Pollen and Walter departed immediately, the latter wondering what adventure and mystery his aunt had referred to, and if it had any connection with the origin of Virginia's displeasure.

"Do not be cast down," said Pollen, supposing Walter's abstraction to proceed from the change in his prospects since the marriage of his uncle. "Your aunt has informed me of the ridiculous choice of your uncle, and of her displeasure, and determination to cast off every member of her family who failed to take umbrage at it. She has even expressed an intention to marry; and if such a thing should ever happen——"

"Should ever happen!" exclaimed Walter, in amazement. "Do you not *know* it will happen?"

"I? Certainly not. All I know about it is, that she has expressed such a purpose several times. I was silent. I did not choose to manifest any dissent from such an idea, though I thought it strange, since she has taken me into her favor, that she never intimated who was to be the happy man."

"Is it possible?"

"It is as I tell you. Do you know him?"

"Thou art the man!" said Walter, placing his hand on the poet's shoulder.

"Me? No. It is a mistake."

"It is no mistake. She has informed me of it herself. It is strange, however, that she should have withheld the information from you—you, who must certainly be as deeply interested in the matter as any one. But you know the manner

of my imperious aunt. You have been complacent in every thing else, and to oppose her will in this, is what she has not conceived to be possible."

"She shall soon be undeceived, then! Had I not been blind and stupid, I might have suspected something of the sort was meant! But who could have supposed that one old enough to be my mother—one, no matter! Return with me, until I open her eyes. Marry your aunt, and defraud the proper heir! I would rather starve in the street! No, no. I have observed the injustice and misery of such alliances, and will never be guilty of that which I have condemned in others. Let us return!"

"No!" said Walter—"do not yet undeceive her. It might kill her; or it might make her your enemy."

"Is it true there is no such thing as disinterested friendship on earth? I thought she had selected me as the object of her bounty, because she believed I had merit, and because the rest of mankind had combined to sink me with their neglect. I deemed her brave in opposing the world, and nobly generous in assuming an object of odium, one with whom no human being sympathized, from despair and destruction. After all, her motive was merely to obtain a husband!"

"Men and women were made to marry," said Walter. "There was no harm in that."

"But women were not designed to marry their grandsons! However, it was never my design to be a permanent pensioner. I hoped to repay her favors, and hope so still. I am in her debt. She has satisfied my creditors; clothed and fed me. I owe her so many dollars, and perhaps some gratitude. Thank Heaven, hope is not extinct in my bosom, or else an impenetrable darkness would prevail. I have two volumes ready for the press, and a single one ere this has repaired a man's fortune and made him an undying name. My name has been won. No earthly power can annihilate it. And if only one or two of the daily papers would say what they honestly think of the merits of my works, there would be purchasers enough to lift me above the reach of the talons of want. If such a thing should happen, I will reimburse your aunt——"

"No—you will do no such thing," said Walter. "She would not receive your money. She would deny that she ever expended any for your benefit. No doubt she has forgotten all about it. She is not mercenary—but she is *Wilsome*. If

h her, she will abuse you—but she will never al-
dvances of money. On the contrary, if the rup-
violent as to make her forget she has a purse, it
that after denouncing you, she will share it with
dismiss you with her curse."
rather have one's curses for dissatisfaction with
y manners, my mere caprices—and if it be a lux-
ng enjoyed it—than bear the scorpion stings of
es—reproaches for having perpetrated a decep-
aving failed to recognize the claims of a son of
erished from neglect, for——"
me for interrupting you. But whither do we

led us towards the den of Abraham Laban, the

will enter and try our fortunes. We may know
be any good thing in store for us from his anx-
s of the greater portion of it. If he be not
at with us—then, indeed, the prospect is gloomy.
regard to this curious aunt of mine will you
?"
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ot break with her abruptly. Do not absolutely
rs. [illegible] the time of separation, if you
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nd one [illegible] It could not
d than [illegible] But [illegible] and [illegible] are
er, and [illegible] be [illegible] to the
abuse [illegible] you when
ever cease [illegible] the remembrance
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n when [illegible] afterwards
n the [illegible]
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her [illegible] will never
censure you. I know her well. On
denounce [illegible] friends for not
with you.
ost persuade me to marry her. For

my own part, I might be contented to do so; but the world, posterity, would attribute unworthy motives—and—I will not do it! That is my irreversible decision. But I will not break with her abruptly."

"Enough. Now let us enter the Hebrew's infernal regions."

They were admitted by the ministering young girl the Jew employed in the capacity of door-keeper, that she might seem to have an honest occupation.

Abraham now bestowed the most of his cordiality on the poet, to his infinite surprise.

"We come to have our fortunes told," said Walter, occupying, unbidden, a chair.

"Told down, I suppose," said the Jew. "It is the way with all. It is astonishing that so many hundreds rely upon me for fortunes, and at the same time condemn me for my gains. Yet, how could I furnish so many with money, if I did not derive it from others? If I did not reap profits, my purse would soon be exhausted, and then the Jew could assist no one. Blind, ungrateful fools!"

"And that's as true as any speech Shylock ever made. But Abraham, you were disposed a short time since to advance me money on my bond."

"A short time since. Well, I was. But a short time after makes a great difference. At two o'clock a man is rich—at three a bankrupt. Your uncle marries. His wife will become his heir in the will she will cause him to sign. Your bond would be worthless."

"Nevertheless, Abraham, you will acknowledge your prescience was at fault. You might have been a loser by the operation."

"I acknowledge no such thing."

"You do not?"

"No. I would have forbidden the bans."

"And what good would that have done?"

"I mean that the wedding would not have taken place, unless it was carried through by the Jesuits. I rarely fail in my calculations. There would have been abundant means of preventing the marriage."

"I wish you had done so."

"It is too late, now. It might have been better for us both, if you had borrowed money on your bond. I would

have been a gainer, and would have been abused—by the Christians. But why should not you and I enjoy your uncle's treasure as well as Gusset? Ha, ha, ha! The Jew has as much right to pick up gold as another person. And in this instance he would have served the rightful heir. But no more. That account is closed."

"And mine was never opened," said Pollen.

"The time had not yet arrived," said the Jew, with a most conciliating smile.

"It had, though!" said the poet. "You declined to treat for my poem. Since then, it has realized me some—some——"

"Four hundred and twenty-five dollars," said the Jew.

"How the d—l did *you* know?" asked Pollen, quickly, for the computation was just.

"No matter. It is my *business* to know. I will not explain the means. To me the manuscript would have been worthless. Hence you see the importance of placing your productions in the proper hands. Every thing depends upon the disposition and influence of the party you deal with. *Now*, we may negotiate if you are so disposed."

"Since you know every thing, my merits, my possessions and expectations, please name the utmost sum I may command, the terms to be dictated by yourself."

"I have calculated it. Ten thousand dollars."

"You take my breath!"

"Do you take the money," said Walter.

"Out of your pocket?" asked the Jew.

"*My* pocket?" said Walter, involuntarily thrusting his hand in it. Oh, yes. He is quite welcome to all he can find there."

"Your terms?" demanded Pollen.

"Two bonds. One for fifteen thousand dollars, due at the expiration of twelve months——"

"Without interest?"

"With interest from date—the legal interest, six per cent."

"Merciful Jew!"

"No. Mercy, friendship, gratitude, are idle terms in matters of business. The merchants denounce us for charging four per cent. a month for our money, when they design to realize eight per cent on it, and sometimes succeed."

"How is that?" asked Walter.

"Why, with fifty thousand dollars, they sell to the amount of half-a-million. If they get ten per cent. profit on their sales, they receive eight per cent. per month on the capital invested. And yet they curse us, call us usurers, and pass laws to prevent us, if possible, but which is not possible, from reaping more than six per cent. on *our* investments!"

"With the ten thousand, then, I might make twenty, and could afford to pay the bonus of five. I think I shall embrace the offer," said the poet.

"But the other bond," said the Jew.

"I forgot that. What is it like? Not a pound of flesh, I hope, Jew?"

"No—but the whole heart. You must bind yourself to marry your young friend's aunt within five days, and you shall have my check payable the day after."

"I'd see you —— first! I would rather marry the pretty girl you keep to admit customers *taken in* by you."

"I have no more to say," replied the Jew, flushed with anger. "But I warn you not to attempt to hold any conversation with that girl! You can have no business with her. Good night, gentlemen."

The young men, thus summarily dismissed, revenged themselves by exchanging significant glances with the girl who unbarred the door for them, and who did not seem to be offended at the liberty they had taken.

Walter, who was impatient for the solution of the mystery in which he was so unconsciously involved, prevailed on the poet to return to the Winkle mansion.

"I thought you would soon return," said the pleased old lady, when they entered the brilliantly illuminated parlor. "One felt an irresistible curiosity to know my secret, and the other always finds my poor house sufficiently attractive."

"Oh, yes," said Pollen, "a home fit for a prince, but I am merely a poet."

"But nevertheless as welcome as a prince," said Wilsome, with a most gracious smile.

"Now, aunt!" said Walter.

"Wait till one of the Points comes in. I have sent for Clara—the mischievous one."

"The Points!" exclaimed Walter, recollecting the adventure of the night when he entered the Professor's house by

mistake. "Pray don't send for her, aunt," said Walter. "I have special reasons for it."

"And I have stronger ones for doing what I wish. She will make a fourth at whist. Pooh! you don't know her. She won't recognize you—she did not know Mr. Pollen. You will find her a pretty, piquant, delightful little creature; and if Virginia should discard you, she will serve for your next love. On such conditions you may have access here, and seats at my table. Here she is!" And sure enough the lively and handsome Clara glided into the room, and Walter was introduced to her. When bowing, and lifting her eyes, she affected to start, as if surprised.

"Don't be alarmed," said Miss Wilsome, "he is no burglar."

"Burglar, aunt!"

"Yes, burglar. Oh, you don't know how heartily we have laughed at that odd mistake of yours!"

"All's known, then!" said Walter. "I begged your father not to divulge it," he continued, addressing Clara, who had taken possession of a seat at his elbow.

"He did not intend to divulge it. But he talks in his sleep, and my mother, woman-like, you know, could not rest until she had possession of his secret."

"And you, may I not venture to say, could not rest until you obtained it from her?"

"You *may* venture to say so! And had I no right to know who it was that had invaded my chamber?"

"True. But I hope you have forgiven me."

"I suppose so. But you must be careful how you commit such mistakes. I should like to know who squeezed my hand."

"It was not me? Probably George——"

"Who? I would like to know."

"I must not tell."

"It was George Parke, since both Walter and Harold have denied it," said Wilsome.

"You ought not to expose George, my good aunt," said Walter.

"After exposing himself in a lady's bed-chamber, he need not fear any exposure of mine. It is all explained now; and so we will have our game. Rose, bring the cards."

"Iss, mem," said Rose, obeying promptly.

"There is something else, aunt, you were to elucidate," said Walter, reverting to the displeasure of Virginia.

"The letter—I forgot the letter. It was found in the flour barrel."

"Found in the flour barrel!" exclaimed Walter.

"Found in the flour barrel!" repeated Clara, in a mock solemnity of tone.

"A floury epistle," said Pollen.

"No one read it, however," said Clara. "We agreed among ourselves that its contents should be sacred. We merely looked at the signature, so that we could return it to the writer."

"That was wrong," said Walter; "it should have been returned to me, the owner."

"I know it, and I said so, but——"

"*I* determined it should be delivered to Virginia. Blame me, Walter," said his aunt. "I did it for my amusement, but under a promise that all should be satisfactorily explained. I knew Virginia could be easily appeased. Sit still, sir. never mind your hat."

"*Your* letter did not fare so well," continued Clara, addressing Pollen.

"Mine? I am not aware of having lost any."

"It was no great loss, I fancy. But it is certain that when you threw your hat on my bed, a letter fell out of it."

"Indeed! Let me remember. I believe I did receive a note that day from my—tailor! I hope you sent *it* back to the writer. I shall not be offended."

"Here it is," said Clara, who had slyly received it from Miss Wilsome.

"Paid! Receipted! My dear Miss, you may have all my letters!" said Pollen, who knew perfectly well who had paid the bill.

"Agreed," said Clara. "But I cannot consent to receive them in the same manner, and at the same time and place."

"My dear aunt," said Walter, rising, "do permit me to run down to Dr. Nitre's——"

"Are you unwell?" asked Clara.

"Pooh, child, she won't die before morning," replied his aunt, shuffling the cards. "And I'm sure she's in bed by this time, and perhaps asleep, and dreaming of you. The habit is fixed upon her—the abominable habit of retiring early, and

early rising, which she got from her father. He is out every morning before the sun is up, cruelly destroying the woodcock, or killing the trout, which he finds in a small brook—a fish, Mr. Pollen, not much longer than your finger."

"And what is your hour, aunt, for retiring?"

"None in particular—but always after midnight. And I rise in the same way, any time after nine. Bring your mate. I am paired."

They played until the game palled on their hands, for the victory, if it could be termed a victory when there was no contest, was invariably on the side of Wilsome and the poet.

"You must be deeply in love, Walter," said his aunt. "I never knew you to play so badly. It must be an affection of the heart which has obtused your head."

"It would follow, then," said Pollen, "that where the intellect is clear, there is no affection of the heart."

Wilsome threw a glance of surprise at the poet, and felt that her shaft had rebounded.

"Let him defend himself," said she.

"No. I yield," said Walter.

"Then take the captive with you," said his aunt, to Clara, who was departing.

"I will," was the response, "but I will not admit him within the door."

"Oh, he finds access without your permission," said Pollen, bowing, and withdrawing.

The next morning Walter hastened to the mansion of Doctor Nitre, and met the doctor himself on the marble steps.

"I am glad to meet you here, my young friend," said the doctor, "and was, indeed, just going to your aunt's to see you. I have learned the cause of Virginia's umbrage—indeed I knew it yesterday, for it was confided to me by Professor Point—and I should have informed you of it, but I knew there was no danger of a serious estrangement, and——"

"I knew all about it, doctor," said Walter, impatient to enter. "If your conscience acquits you, for prolonging Virginia's pain, I am sure I do."

"But you have had your revenge, sir! I have been punished. Your abrupt departure last evening was attributed by Mrs. Nitre, to some misconduct of mine; I believe it was for leaving you to visit some poor languishing patient; and I assure you, in the strictest confidence, that I endured the

severest curtain lecture last night I ever listened to in all my life."

"I am sorry to hear it, doctor."

"And I am glad to find a sympathizer. Mrs Nitre has been in an ill humor ever since. But the clouds will blow away, and the sun shine forth again, when she sees you. Good-bye—and good luck to you."

Walter rang and was admitted. But before the servant had an opportunity to announce his name to Mrs Nitre, he espied Virginia gliding into the parlor, and immediately joined her. She still wore a serious aspect, and there were visible traces of recent discomposure.

But when the lover made a full confession of his night's frolic; of the encounter with the poet: the Jew's interview with the fortune hunters; the death of the monkey, and the adventure in the professor's house, the gloom vanished from the young lady's brow, and was succeeded by hearty and hilarious laughter.

"In the name of wonder what is the matter with the girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Nitre, running in. Virginia was speechless from her cachinatory convulsions.

"Only diverted at a little confession I have been making," said Walter.

"Oh, *you* are here, my dear friend! The stupid servant! I will discharge her! Not to inform me you had called. And—bless me! I am in dishabille!" she added, glancing at her morning wrapper and quickly vanishing. Before she returned, Walter had made his peace with Virginia, and departed.

When he appeared again before his aunt, she could not avoid observing the change in his spirits and appearance; and she listened with satisfaction to his narration of the proceedings at his uncle's mansion after the dispersion of the wedding guests. Being greatly diverted at the annoyance of Gusset, on whom, when her name was mentioned, she never failed to bestow a broadside of opprobrious epithets, she approved the conduct of Walter, and desired him to say to Sergeant Blore, that whenever he visited the city, her house would be open for his reception, and might be freely considered as his head-quarters. But she condemned Walter for riding in the coach with the "impudent hussy," and intimated that if he had quarrelled with her outright she might have become reconciled

to him, and indeed might have deferred her own wedding to some distant period.

"When is it to take place, aunt?" he asked.

"I have not fixed the day—but soon."

"Is he impatient?"

"He? He don't know any thing about it yet!" was the prompt reply.

"That is most extraordinary," said Walter. "I always thought it required two to make a match, unless, indeed, one may substitute a dummy."

"None of your nonsense. A dummy husband might be very convenient, though, under certain circumstances! But mine shall be a man of genius; one looked up to by the world with admiration; one who can reply to the impertinences of frivolous tongues, in Greek; one who, when lifted above the fangs of poverty, and the sneers of tradespeople, will be universally respected; and who will have justice done him by the press of the country, when it is known he is independent of their aid in the procurement of a subsistence. Surely I, who can accomplish all these things for him, have the right to name the day and condition, and he must have too much discernment to throw any obstacles in the way."

"I suppose so, aunt; but I don't know. I have heard it said that Pollen once lost a fortune by refusing to yield to the caprices of a woman."

"He did—he told me so himself. But has he not suffered for his folly? Would he be likely to repeat such an indiscretion, with all his experience of the evils of abject destitution; I don't fear it. But come—let us go to the dentist."

They drove to the gorgeously upholstered shop of the tooth-filer, and were ushered into a saloon hung round with second-hand mirrors bought at Moses's haberdashery, and were invited to recline on the red cushions of the sofas.

"I shall do no such thing," said Wilsome to the maid. "I am never kept waiting any where. Tell Mr. Enamel that Miss Wilsome Winkle desires to have his attention immediately."

"Mr. Enamel, miss," said the fine servant maid, "is in New York, and will not return before evening. But Mr. Foil, his friend from New York, and the fashionable dentist of that city, is here to-day to operate for him."

"He don't operate on me! Mr. Foil, indeed! No. My mouth is not open to every body! Tell Mr. Enamel, when he returns, to bring his instruments to my house, and perform the operation there. If he fails, I shall look for a more grateful dentist. I first saw this Enamel," she continued to Walter, as they returned home, "several years ago, in church, when all the wealth he possessed was a fine suit of clothes, and a handsome face. The congregation was large and rich, which of course was the reason he joined them, and I aided him in extending his acquaintance. The minister recommended him to me, and I believe his large family to this day pay nothing for the dentist's services; and so Enamel's business increased most wonderfully. He has made a fortune, however, and is less accommodating than he used to be. But he shall accommodate me."

"Aunt," said Walter, "do you suppose there was any agreement between the minister and the dentist?"

"Perhaps none specified. But like another class, so much abused, there are some clergymen the merest deadheads, who make merchandise of religion. While denouncing the mercenary spirit of the age, their own edifices, which they call churches, are the marts for the sale of all sorts of wares, and you never fail to hear the rattle of money in them. It would almost seem as if they bartered salvation for silver, and begged in the name of the Lord."

"And that might be construed as taking the name of the Lord in vain——"

"True, Walter. For sometimes, I doubt not, they beg in vain. If Enamel disappoints me, to-morrow we will go to New York."

"To New York, aunt?"

"Certainly. Do not people go there every day? There is nothing wonderful in it. Yes, I will go there, and be operated on by some one who shall not learn my name, and where I dwell. I have my reasons for it."

"Then I should not be able to return to Babbleton to-day."

"Of course not."

"And if Enamel comes, I shall not be permitted to spend the evening at Dr. Nitre's."

"No. You are subject to my orders. But if you desire it, Virginia and Julia shall both come to my house."

"I do desire it, aunt."

Virginia and Julia were sent for immediately, and they dined at the Winkle mansion. In the evening a splendid equipage drove up to the door, and Dr. Enamel descended, and was conducted to the chamber which had been prepared for him, and where he was soon after joined by Miss Wilsome and Walter.

Here Walter learned, for the first time, that his aunt's beautiful teeth he had been accustomed to admire, were all false, and that the roots of the one to be extracted, were the last remains of nature's handiwork. When her teeth were removed, Miss Wilsome's lips fell in, and her voice was sepulchral.

"If it gives you too much pain," said Enamel, when preparing to incise the gum, "you had better take a little ether. I have brought a bottle for that purpose."

"Throw it out of the window!" said the old lady, now looking very old indeed. "I will have none of it. I shall never place myself in a condition to have my throat cut, and be a mere silent spectator, without the ability to resist. True, Walter is here, and would revenge me. Still, I won't relinquish my own powers of resistance. Do your work as quickly as possible—I will bear the pain."

She bore it like a heroine. She did not even wince under the infliction. But the root adhered so tenaciously to its socket, that all the strength of Enamel was exerted to extract it. And in the struggle, he placed one of his hands on the head of his patient, and by an unlucky movement, the whole mass of dark glistening hair, which had often elicited the admiration of Walter, slipped aside and fell to the floor, leaving his aunt's head as bald, and almost as smooth and white as an egg.

"Give me my hair!" she cried, starting up, and ejecting the blood which followed the extraction of the root of the tooth.

"How is this?" demanded Walter, rising, and assuming a menacing attitude, for at first he supposed the dentist had by some process or other deprived his aunt of her natural adornment.

"It is only her wig," whispered Enamel. "She has been bald fifteen years."

"Wilsome replaced the hair, adjusting it before a mirror

speechless with indignation, for Pollen had passed by the door which had been neglectfully left open. Then she replaced her teeth, without uttering a word.

"I am sorry the accident happened," said Enamel.

"You should have remembered that it happened once before," replied Wilsome, after a long silence. "It is not pleasant to be exposed thus, in the presence of witnesses. True, one is my nephew—but he knew nothing about it. And Pollen must be passing, just at that moment!"

"He was in a revery, aunt," said Walter, "and incapable of observing external objects."

"I hope so," said she. "That is all, sir," she continued to Enamel. "To-morrow send me your bill, and I will give you a check. You know I will not permit my name to go on a dentist's books."

Enamel bowed and withdrew, and the next minute his coach was heard rolling away.

As Walter and his aunt proceeded towards the parlor, where the young ladies were engaged in some boisterous entertainment, many solemn injunctions of inviolable secrecy were imposed. The old lady declared, in the event of his betraying her, the estrangement which she had already decreed, would be changed to bitter enmity, without the benefit of truce, or an interlude of special friendly meeting, during the remainder of their lives.

When they appeared in the parlor, it was ascertained that the poet had truly fallen into one of his fits of abstraction, and wandered away in the street, muttering incoherently, something upon the subject of impartial criticism. Wilsome seemed annoyed. But Walter and Virginia realized a happy unconsciousness of the vexations to which mortality is liable.

CHAPTER XVI.

FLIGHT OF LUCY FROM HER LOVERS. JOHN DOWLY'S VISIT TO THE WILLOW BROOK FARM.

At the village Roland attempted in vain to obtain an interview with Lucy. Repeatedly the effort was made; and when

e withdrew the last time, defeated and chagrined, and with malignant impulses struggling in his breast, he was met by owe—his despised rival—who was approaching the mansion. owe, always pale, but never more self-possessed, diminished is pace, and looking his enemy steadily in the eye, smiled erisively. Roland, disconcerted, and trembling with fear, ast down his eyes and strode past without uttering a word.

Lowe was admitted, and a few moments after Lucy appeared before him, and occupied a seat at his side. And she egan the conversation.

"Mr. Lowe," said she, "I chanced to see your meeting ith Roland in the street. You seemed prepared for a rencontre. There was defiance on your lip, and vengeance in our heart."

"He is a coward—therefore I cannot attack him."

"He is dangerous, though cowardly, as you say. I would ot, for the world, have any blood spilled on my account. Will you, for my sake, forbear?"

"Certainly. I never could desire to do him injury, except n my own defence, or yours."

"I shall withdraw from a place where it is necessary to ave a defender. Will you promise, during my absence, not o come in hostile collision with Roland?"

"Most willingly, especially if the desire is at all prompted y a motive to save me from the effects of his evil machinaions."

"I would save you from his vengeance, which is not often alked in the victimization of its object. I would save him, oo, from the consequences of your enmity. And I would save ayself from the heart-rending reflection, that I had been the nnocent cause of strife, and wounds, and perhaps death. Oh, romise me that you will not have any conflict with him!"

"I do promise, Lucy, as I said, unless it be unavoidable."

"It may be avoided, sir, if you *will* it—for you know the ruth of the old proverb, where ever there is a will there is a ray."

"I fear the proverb is not true. I have the will, for intance, to make you mine, now and for ever. I see you trembe. Fear not—I will not importune you further, until it is airly ascertained if there be no other way to remove the impediment. But I have a most vehement will to know the

place you have selected for your seclusion. Now, where is the way?"

"You jest with me," said Lucy, smiling; "and in truth I am glad to see your spirits reviving; for I had learned you were in a melancholy mood."

"In your presence, dear Lucy, my gloom and despondency vanish, like vapors before the sun."

"If you deem such fine flattering speeches the way, you are mistaken."

"I did not—I did not. It was uttered involuntarily, and for my own gratification. It *is* an enjoyment, Lucy, for me to utter the truthful sentiments of my heart in your presence. But the way—why may I not learn the way?"

"For the reason I alleged. The decree cannot be recalled, until there may be no longer any reason for its enforcement. Still there may be a way, if there be a will—that is, if the will be true and faithful, and constant——"

"Until when?"

"I cannot tell. I know not. You know what we would learn, but will not tell. Let that suffice."

"It must, perforce. We are interrupted."

Biddy Boggle, who had admitted some one into the hall, stood at the door of the parlor.

"Who is it, Biddy?" asked Lucy.

"Dill Bizzle," said she.

"What does he want?"

"He says—no—I beg pardon—I meant to say Bill—Bizzle—this time. He says there's a female woman—*he* said it mam—has a letter for you, from your aunt."

"Show her into the other room, Biddy, and bring me the letter," said Lucy, in some trepidation, for she believed the messenger came from her aunt in New York. And so it proved; and a bright flush spread over her face, when she glanced at the well-known peculiarity of her aunt's caligraphy.

"I will call again, if permitted, this evening," said Lowe, rising. "May I do so?"

"Certainly," said Lucy, half unconsciously, and she proceeded to tear open the envelope as Lowe retired.

While Lucy was perusing the letter, the bearer of it, Miss Edith McCrabbed, a thin, pale, hoop-nosed old maid, was conducted into the sitting-room, where she was recognized, by the

love to sister Edith. Tell her not to insist on my Edith having any refreshments, for she never takes any.

"Your own aunt,

"FLORA BLOUNT.

"P. S.—Do not forget your purse, or any jewels of value. You know I am very poor, and we never know what vicissitudes may be in reserve for us.

"FLORA."

Bill Dizzle glided through the hall with a trunk on his shoulder, as the first whistle of the approaching train was heard; and the next moment Lucy ran in and threw her arms around her mother's neck. "Farewell, dear mother!" cried she. "It is best to go thus—to part now—but we will write daily—and if I do not return soon, you can come to me I will induce my aunt to make every thing convenient for the visit. Never fear! I never yet strove in vain to please. I will convince her that she is not poor—for I believe she is rich—and are you not her only sister? Farewell, dear, dear mother!"

A moment after, being released from her mother's embrace, Lucy was crossing the street with Edith McCrabbed, and when the train paused, the two were just at the steps, and ascended into the car without being recognized, or attracting the slightest notice from the crowd that stood in the vicinity.

When comfortably seated, and just as the cars were starting away, Lucy beheld Roland gazing at some ladies sitting a few feet in front of her. She turned her head quickly away, and trembled lest she might be discovered. But as the train moved off, she became satisfied she had escaped his observation, and once more breathed freely.

Mrs. Winkle laughed and wept alternately. The letter from her sister, the Scotch messenger, the trunk hurried away on Dizzle's shoulder, and Lucy's promptitude of action, were irresistible sources of amusement. But then the reality, the sad reality, that Lucy was gone, and that she was left alone for an indefinite period, with perhaps an enemy awaiting a favorable opportunity to aim a blow at the small remnant of her fortune, and with many malicious persons around, ever ready to rejoice at her calamity, produced, at every ebb of her spirits, a flood of tears.

It was while her spirits were thus ebbing and flowing, that

Lowe again entered, anticipating the hour appointed for his return; for he had learned from Bill Dizzle that Lucy had departed, but in what direction Bill was unable to say, for he had been called away from the depot after putting down the trunk, and there were no less than three trains with passengers to leave in the next few minutes for as many different places.

"Is it true," cried Lowe, "that Lucy has left us?"

"True, indeed. You men would not let her rest, and so she resolved to escape."

"But she appointed an hour for me to come hither this very evening."

"Then come. Or rather stay. I hope she did not promise to be here herself?"

"I understood her so."

"You must have misunderstood her; she never deceives. But she has a spice of humor, and knew the house would be open to receive you. Laugh at it, Mr. Lowe, and confess that the men do not possess all the spirit vouchsafed poor humanity. I have laughed until tears came to my relief."

"But is it prudent, Mrs. Winkle, to permit Lucy to depart unattended, and perhaps to remain for days or weeks, where no one interested in her welfare will watch over her, and be ready to defend her from insult, if any should be offered? You know she is irresistibly lovely."

"I know the gentlemen are in the habit of saying so. But be not uneasy. Her safety will be guarded by others, and I have confidence in her own sense of duty and strength of purpose. Why, did she not fly the danger here? I assure you her departure was a suggestion of her own. I have no fears for Lucy."

"And you will not tell me where she has gone?"

"No. She did not authorize me to do so."

"Very well. I am then at liberty to find out, if I can. Permit me to take my leave. In half an hour I must be seated in the down train."

As Lowe said this, he looked to find some indication in Mrs. Winkle's features of the truth of his conjecture. He had heard Dizzle say the letter was from Lucy's aunt, and although he was aware that Miss Wilsome had decreed the banishment of the widow's family, yet he had never heard of the existence of another aunt. Therefore he hastened to the cars when they

paused at the depot, and set off for Philadelphia in pursuit of Lucy.

Roland saw him depart from his room at the inn, a chamber which he often occupied expressly for the purpose of gazing at the ladies. When the train was in motion, he started up, and resolved to make another attempt to see Lucy, and even propose to marry her in church, if no other mode remained to make her his, and thus snatch her from his hated rival.

"Mrs. Winkle," said he, when admitted, "I am come in a fit of desperation."

"Oh Lud!" said she, "I hope there is no danger of being killed by you!"

"You misunderstand me. I am come once more to beg an interview with Lucy. And I am prepared to say that I will wed her in open day, and in the church. My heart, my hand, my fortune are all laid at her feet."

"Generous sir! You are too liberal! I will not inquire what boon it was you have hitherto been willing to bestow upon my poor child. Suffice it that your all is tendered at last."

"You seem to mock me. Will you procure me an interview?"

"How can I?"

"Command her to appear in your presence. She will obey."

"She cannot."

"Cannot?"

"She is not here. She is gone."

"Gone? Where?"

"That I cannot tell."

"Cannot tell!" exclaimed Roland furiously, and rising. "*I* can! She has eloped, and I know with whom! Madam, you could not have consented to it. If so, where was the necessity? I saw her seducer depart in the cars for Philadelphia. Good day, madam. I will pursue them! I have agents in the city, madam, who will soon find them, and Lucy shall be restored. Good day, madam! I will spend ten thousand dollars rather than that vagabond shall have her. The vagabond is your handsome pale-faced Lowe, madam—a villain, madam!"

Fortunately Roland did not look behind when rushing out, else he would have beheld the merry widow dangerously agitated with excessive laughter. The idea that Lucy's admirers

were pursuing in one direction, when she was flying in another and an opposite one, was irresistibly diverting.

Roland stamped in front of the inn with his watch in his hand, resolved if the next down train should be a minute behind its time. to make those who were to blame suffer for it. He was a large stockholder. But this time, as if all the doomed victims of his ill-nature were to elude his grasp, the train arrived a minute before the time, and there was yet no opportunity to vent his accumulated wrath. He sprang in, and was soon rattled into the city.

Meantime, as the shades of evening fell upon the peaceful village, and the mocking-bird began his song with the rising of the moon, unconscious that she who had never failed to acknowledge the tuneful salutation was away, an old-fashioned spring-shaft gig stopped in front of the inn, and an old-fashioned gentleman, in an old-fashioned coat and hat, descended to the ground. After giving the reins to the ostler, and charging him particularly to take good care of his ancient horse, the old gentleman turned away and proceeded deliberately to the widow's mansion.

"I am very, very glad to see you. Mr. Dowly!" exclaimed Mrs. Winkle, when the old gentleman was ushered into her presence. "You could not have selected a better time to accept my invitation to tea," she continued, shaking his hand heartily, "for I am quite alone and require the company of a true friend."

"My Maker knows I am your true friend. I will laugh with you, or weep with you, and even die——"

"With me, or for me?" asked the widow.

"Upon my word I don't know which would be the most proper. They are the words I should have spoken when young —but I was stupid—yet honest and true—yes, true and honest, Edith."

"I am sure of it. And if you had spoken your sentiments boldly, I do not know—— but all that is past, buried a quarter of a century ago. Sit opposite. Bring in the tea, Biddy. Let me make it. How has it happened, Mr. Dowly, that of all the evenings in the world, you should have selected this, when I most desired a social companion, to pay me the often-deferred visit?"

"I knew you were alone."

"You did? How did you learn that?"

"Every body knows it. It is already the talk of the town and the country. I heard them speaking of it in the bar-room."

"Of what?"

"Of the poor child's elopement. But I first learned it of Dizzle, who came to my house."

"Lucy's elopement!"

"Yes. But be comforted. Roland is a bad man——"

"Do they say she ran away with him?"

"No, no. But he told every one he met, that she had run away with Lowe, the vagabond, as he called him; and declared he would bring her back, and have her lover locked up in prison. Then I ventured to come hither, hoping I might be able to afford you some little consolation; and to repeat the Christian precepts, which alone can impart comfort in trouble. But you are not cast down——"

"No! Ha, ha, ha! What a world! Oh, how happy the Arums and Crudles, and Snobsons must be! How they exult, and pity the disgraced, poverty-stricken Winkles! And why should not I laugh too? Oh, that they could see me! I've spilt my tea More hot water, Biddy."

"Do not be so much disturbed, my dear madam," said Dowly, looking in alarm upon the spasmodic symptoms of the widow

"Disturbed, Mr Dowly? I beg, I earnestly entreat you will believe me, when I say, that whilst the envious gossips are exulting, or supposing they are exulting over my calamity, I enjoy some of the happiest moments of my life, and would fain have them witness my felicity."

"Felicity, Mrs Winkle?"

"That may be rather too strong a word; but I don't know another that would answer better. Mr. Dowly, Lucy has not eloped with any one!"

"I thank my Maker! Oh, I thank my blessed Maker for it! Laugh on I will laugh with you—for I do love that dear child as much as her parent can, and I hope you will permit me to say so."

"And it was when you supposed me overwhelmed with mortification and irremediable distress—abandoned and dishonored by my own child, and reviled and scoffed at by my neighbors—that you came to comfort me, to say that you were still my friend—that you loved my dear departed daughter;

to offer consolation—to—Oh, Mr. Dowly, let my tears have free vent. May God bless you!"

"Do not weep, dear lady! If it had been really as they suppose, and as some of them might have had the wickedness to desire, still, believe me, John Dowly would have never forsaken the Edith that once and always so completely possessed his heart."

"They are not the tears of weeping, Mr. Dowly. They proceed from joy—joy, that there exists one pure and noble being in the world, and that being my friend If it were not utterly too late in the afternoon of our lives, this hand of mine should be yours, as the only recompense I could offer."

"I am happy! To hear you say so, is worth more than worlds to me! My dreams are realized. In them I have heard you utter similar words, and they are like the memories of blessed youth. All I ask is that I may not be considered bold and intrusive in my eager friendship, and in the tender of my services. Only permit me to think of the past, to dream on, and talk of the sunny days when we were young together, and I shall desire no more exquisite happiness in this life. Permit this, and whatever I possess is yours and your children's to command."

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Dowly. Any little, or great incident of the past that you can remember, or feeling, or word, or scene, that may be recalled, you may refer to without hesitation. It will be a pleasure to me. Although I certainly loved my husband dearly, yet John Dowly was always near my heart, and its portals were never closed against him. I always loved him to the full extent that duty permitted; and my estimate of his character was not erroneous. I have no doubt that what your good heart prompts, your hand would execute to the utmost, if your means were only equal to your will."

"My means—you, too, suppose I am poor. Every body thinks so but Abraham Laban, and he would not tell any thing to the contrary, for fear it might interfere with some of his contemplated operations."

"I am sure I shall be rejoiced to learn it is not so," said Mrs. Winkle

"I have my poor old house, and my few barren acres. I raise no great crops, and contrive to pay my taxes. That's all the people know," continued the old man smiling, and his

lustrous dark eyes evincing the satisfaction he felt "And I wear an old-fashioned coat and hat, which attract the attention of the people on the boat, for I often see them gazing at me."

"I'm sure they look very genteel, Mr. Dowly, said the widow.

"They are without lint or stain. I take great care of them. And why do you suppose I take such great care of these old things? I'll tell you. They remind me of the past, and they make the years roll by imperceptibly. They keep fresh in my memory the associations I like to dwell upon My old brown coat once sported in its button-hole a beautiful flower dropped from your fair hand—I have it still in my old Bible!"

"I don't remember it," said Mrs. Winkle, smiling.

"But I do. It was at a gay party at General C——'s. You sat upon the balcony in the moonlight, and Winkle was with you. You uttered a lament for the loss of the flower. I was below, and seized it, and hid it in my bosom."

"Why, Mr. Dowly, now I *do* remember it. It fell just when Mr. Winkle was proposing——"

"I thought so at the time. But that made no difference. I resolved to preserve the beautiful blossom, not for any superior sweetness of its own, but for the sake of the hand which had clasped, and in memory of the lips that had pressed it. Thus old objects remind me of the happy past, when the world to my youthful eyes was illuminated with a heavenly brightness. And believe me, that no thought of censure crossed my mind—nor any inclination to blame you for preferring another, ever arose in my breast!"

"I am sure of it."

"Yes, you may be sure of it. Although you were another's in reality, in my dreams you were mine; and as I slept one half my time, I am indebted to you for all the happiness I have enjoyed."

"Mercy on me, Mr. Dowly! I was not aware of all that!"

"And the old objects I have preserved remind me of those blissful years with which they were associated. But the people think I am poor, and unable to procure other clothing! Little when we were young, I had sufficient fortune to aspire, if my heart had not been faint, even to your hand. Upon your marriage, I retired from business and lived in seclusion,

where I now dwell. And if I have not spent any thing since that day, what do you think has become of my fortune?"

"I am sure I hope you have it still."

"I have. But it has grown larger as I have grown older. I have had nothing to do but to watch the securities I held, collect the interest and compound it. And why have I done so? I am without kindred. But there are those I love, and they will need it. They shall have it!"

"You become enthusiastic, Mr. Dowly. Can it be possible you mean me—my family?"

"Who else? Have I loved any others? Have others treated the supposed poor old John Dowly with respect? No! The ability to bestow it on you, and when, too, circumstances have made it acceptable, is my chief delight in this world. I would have aided your honorable husband, if he had applied to me; but I had not the presumption to tender him any assistance. He must have known I had fortune. But no matter; I have waited for an opportunity, and have not waited in vain. When Roland became possessed of the mortgage on this property, I knew his object, and resolved to defeat him. *He* thinks me poor—and he must not be undeceived. He is a bad man, and I desire to have no strife with him. He knows I rescued Lucy from his grasp, but he thinks I have not been informed of his design. But Lucy! We have forgotten her. Bless my life! I never was so beguiled before! It has been my intention at every pause to ask where the dear child has gone. I know why she sought another asylum, and would fain learn the place of her abode, if it be not improper to desire it."

"Not at all. She is by this time with her aunt Flora."

"Bless me! Is *she* living yet? and unmarried?"

"Living and unmarried. She never could find a mate sufficiently heroical and romantic to captivate her heart. She rejected many."

"I know she did! She would have rejected me. After you were wedded, I determined to seek her hand. She seemed to suspect my intention, and took the first opportunity to nip my hope in the bud. It was fortunate, for I could never have loved her."

"She has never loved any one but the heroes of her novels; and those she will never cease to adore."

"Does she read novels yet?"

"Incessantly. And although residing in the most p place in a great city, she lives in utter seclusion. Lucy c not have found a better abode."

"I'm glad to hear it. I'm glad it's so."

"And just to think that both Lowe and Roland searching for her in Philadelphia! It is laughable."

"It is so; and I shall laugh heartily at it. But Ro I have a nice little stratagem for him. You must come it. He will be beaten at the election. Walter is to ma speech against his party, and Lucy has rejected his addr with scorn. His thirst for vengeance will be uncontroll and he will endeavor to distress you by foreclosing the m gage."

"And you will not permit us to be thrust into street?"

"I would be thrust into the river first, with a mill tied to my neck. When the money is demanded, merely you have it not———"

"But Dibble says I have enough in bank to pay th terest."

"The interest—but he will demand the principal. him proceed. The trifling costs will be of no moment. him sell———"

"Mercy on me! Sell my house?"

"Yes—but you shall be the purchaser, no matter may bid against you. I will be near to sign a check for amount. Then the property will be yours and unincumbe and Roland's rage will consume him. The Arums and C dles will be the victims of chagrin. None will know wh the money comes—but they might, if you used my check will bring the money, and you shall have it in your p They will be astonished, you relieved, and John Dowly happiest man in the world."

"I am not sure that Walter would sanction the arra ment. He is a little fastidious on such delicate points. you will then hold the mortgage?"

"Oh, yes, it will be surrendered to you, and you can put it in my keeping."

"I see no objection as———"

"No—do not conjure up any, unless you desire to m me miserable."

At this stage of the conversation, Biddy appeared,

Without being questioned by her mistress, announced "Dill Sizzle."

He was, as ever, promptly admitted, and said he bore a letter from Sergeant Blore for Walter. The widow took possession of it, and Bill retired immediately. The letter not being sealed, Mrs. Winkle assumed the liberty of reading it. It ran as follows:

"Dear Sir: Excuse my bad writing, for you know I write with my left hand, and hold the paper down with my right stump. I saw Col. Oakdale to-day, and he said you would be home to-night, therefore I write.

"I want to see you as soon as convenient. The enemy has begun operations, and violated the capitulations. My garrison holds out yet, but we are in distress, and if not soon relieved, we must surrender, expecting no quarter. The enemy——"

"Pardon my interruption," said Mr. Dowly, but do you know what is meant by the enemy?"

"Oh, yes," said the widow; "my brother's wife, the new Mrs. Winkle. [Reading] The enemy has almost made your uncle a prisoner in his own house. His cheeks are paler, and his eyes bloodshotten. The intention is to make him abdicate. I know it is. At the same time, the she-wolf pretends to be so affectionate, that he cannot speak a harsh word to her. But she fills all his time, and talks so much, that he can say nothing. There is foul play in the wind, I know. She has convinced him there is danger in war, and that he is liable to be killed by the Bull. She wants him to make his will—which I call an abdication; and if he abdicates in her favor, she'll not care a grape-shot how soon he does die. Indeed, she might help him off—like the infernal tigress Catharine of Russia did her husband. So you see the danger is very great. But I am not idle. Every time the red haired Scotch lawyer Bawson comes out of her closet, I lead him into mine; and as he is a Scotchman, and as I offer two dollars where she offers one, I may gain the victory, as Richelieu used to do. He has agreed, if ordered by your uncle to draw up a will, to insert your name. The she devil, like all women who are tyrants, don't know a will from a deed, and is a perfect fool in business transactions. But I pity the commander.

"Have you seen a lawyer for me about my own entangle-

ment? Bawson says I have the advantage of her. She's been married twice, and I only once. But I doubt it. She was married to men, and I to a woman. It makes all the difference in the world. No matter. If she declares war, I must defend myself to the last extremity—and I won't pay any indemnity. Reconnoitre the old catamount for me before you leave town. Come to the garrison through the orchard. The Bull keeps all the cattle yet.

"Your faithful old soldier, TH. BLOBB."

This despatch afforded the old couple an ample topic for the remainder of the evening; and when they rose from the tea-table, it was striking eleven o'clock. The old gentleman, after declaring the hours just spent were among the happiest of his life, and receiving an assurance from the widow that her lonely condition had been assuaged by his presence, departed for the inn, and calling for his old horse, drove slowly homeward by moonlight in a delightful revery.

CHAPTER XVII.

WILSOME WINKLE DISMISSES THE POET—ROLAND MEETS LOWE AND THE ACTOR, BUT NOT LUCY.

WALTER'S visit to his aunt was capriciously prolonged, under the belief that his presence was the means of procuring her a larger share of the poet's company, and additional rubbers at whist. But the moment the attraction of her nephew seemed to cease in its effect on Pollen, she dismissed him. It occurred on the very day that Lucy departed from Babbleton, and the young man and Virginia were espied passing through the village in an open carriage, having landed from the boat just when Roland had taken his seat in the cars. He cast a fierce glance at the happy pair and secretly resolved to balk their purposes, for it seemed to be his ruling passion to mar the happiness of others, as if by that means he could realize a greater share himself. Walter, not observing him, urged forward the horses, and never paused until he reached the hospitable mansion of the colonel, where he remained all

night for the purpose of shooting woodcock early the next morning.

At the Winkle mansion in the city, a succession of novel events followed the departure of Walter.

When her nephew rose from the dinner table, Pollen was requested by Miss Wilsome to remain, and was invited to drink wine with her. For some time the poet had abstained from the use of such stimulants, under the persuasion that they were uniformly pernicious to one of his excitable temperament; and Wilsome had once applauded his resolution, for she was not ignorant of his infirmity. But now the time had arrived for him to propose; and as he had evinced no disposition to bring matters to a crisis, she determined to stimulate him a little. But in vain. He only spouted Greek, and lamented over his lost one in heaven. He abused the critics, and denounced the publishers. The Jews were likewise the objects of his anathemas. Then he lived in the future, and anticipated the time when all who had neglected him, or wronged him, would be the victims of remorse. The popular authors of the day, who monopolized the favors of the public press, would sink in oblivion, and the works of men of genius rise to set no more. He was deaf to the suggestions of his entertainer, and finally arose from the table, and with folded arms and muttering lips, strode through the hall and out into the street.

The old lady did not faint, or turn pale, or become violently agitated. Her heart was proof against all such effects of disappointment. If she had ever loved truly and dearly, it must have been at so remote a period, she had forgotten it herself; and her heart was now quite impervious to tender emotions, when meditating the details of a matrimonial arrangement. But all her feelings were not callous. Time cannot wholly conquer the impulses of resentment in the breasts of old women. There are some passions as indestructible as the immortal mind—the evil as well as the good. But Miss Wilsome was not naturally malignant; and she possessed a certain hereditary magnanimity, which mingled with, and sometimes overcame her resentments.

"Rose," said she, when the maid answered the silver bell.

"Iss, mem."

"When Mr. Pollen comes again, say I am not at home."

"Iss, mem."

"When he calls the second time, say I am engaged."

"Iss, mem."

"The third time he comes, say I desire he will leave his address, so that I can send him a note. The fellow may not have money enough to buy a dinner; but he dines here no more. I will not be scandalized for nothing."

"Iss, mem."

"Hold your tongue, and go about your business! Go to the door. Some one is ringing now. If it be Pollen, do as I ordered you."

"Iss, mem."

"Well, who is it? A card! Did I not say he must call three times before you took his card? Stay! It is Mr. Lowe! and at this hour! Admit him—perhaps he has not dined. Bring him here. He shall take the poet's wine, and perhaps——"

She was interrupted by the entrance of Lowe, whom she greeted with much cordiality, and then compelled him to occupy a seat at the table.

"Now, what's the news? Mind, you are to say nothing in relation to the disgraceful affairs of my brother."

"But I must be permitted to refer to your niece. I suppose she is here?"

"Here? Not she!"

"Not here?"

"No, sir. I have said it, and it used to be a saying, that a Winkle always spoke the truth. But the poor poet, Pollen—ha, ha, ha!—asserted that a good reason might be alleged for the utterance of a certain quantity of falsehoods, and what do you suppose it is?"

"I am sure I cannot conjecture."

"Why, it is that truth is too precious a commodity to be lavishly expended!"

"And so is money. Therefore, like other poets, he may not always be prepared to pay his debts."

"Excellent. I shall prefer you to the poet. Be my guest, and we will have a whist party."

"Excuse me—until I can hear something of Lucy."

"Lucy! Is she really not at home?"

"She left home suddenly to-day, and would not permit it to be known whither she was going."

"Not even her mother?"

"I believe her mother does know; but she refuses to tell me."

"Why should she tell you? Are you in love with her?"

"I confess I am!"

"Then, I presume she reciprocates the affection."

"And runs away?"

"Certainly. The women are enigmas, and understand each other. If the men knew us as well as we do ourselves, there would be no hope for us. But, fortunately, we can keep our own secrets. She had a sufficient reason for going, depend upon it. You have your mystery, and she has hers. She is safe—with some schoolmate, perhaps. No Winkle ever committed an impropriety, and none ever will. I except my brother; but he is a man, and men, you know, can commit them with impunity."

"I am glad you feel no uneasiness on account of the absence of your niece."

"Uneasiness! Why should I, while her mother is calm? But take my advice, and cease to pursue that silly girl. She is pretty, I admit; virtuous, I know; accomplished, as all may see; but she will be an expensive wife, and her lord should have an ample treasury, which I presume you have not. Besides, I had intended her for another," continued Wilsome, fondling the great white cat, which she had taught to occupy a seat at the table.

"Another?"

"Yes—a rich man. I mean Roland."

"Madam," said Lowe, sternly, "Roland is a villain!"

"Is this jealousy?"

"No, Miss Wilsome, it is the truth. I will, confidentially, relate to you the circumstance which proves it." He did so.

"If I thought, sir, you possessed the wicked nature of your master," said Wilsome, pulling the cat's ear, "I would have you drowned this night! Oh, the monster! To make such an attempt upon a Winkle! Walter shall cut his ears off!"

"No; Lucy forbade any one molesting him. I met him, and branded him with the name of coward. Lucy learned this shortly afterwards, and exacted a promise that I would have no deadly conflict with him. And she does not wish her brother to know any thing of the occurrence."

"It is an affair, then, in which I shall not meddle. But

I shall revoke my invitation to Roland to visit the mansion. You shall be welcome, always; but still, I would have you abandon the pursuit of my niece. She is in safety—you may rely upon it; and if she has resolved not to be found, you will not succeed in your endeavors. Remain with me."

"I will do so cheerfully, for the present, and have taken lodgings for several days at my hotel. I have a little mischief in contemplation against some of the rich enemies of Lucy in Babbleton, which, with your assistance, may be consummated without difficulty. We shall have to employ the milliners and mantuamakers."

"Willingly. I can command them all! There's the bell! Who is it, Rose?"

"Mr. Roland, mem."

"Roland!"

"I pray you see him," said Lowe.

"Take him into the front parlor."

"Iss, mem."

"Mr. Lowe, do you go into the rear one; but remain out of sight."

It was done as she desired.

"Miss Wilsome," said Roland, not seeming to observe the old maid's stiff, frigid nod, "I come in great concern, to ask if your niece is at your house."

"She is not; and I do not know where she is."

"Then she is lost—ruined!"

"How is she ruined?"

"Her character is gone for ever!"

"That is impossible, sir; therefore, it is false!"

"You are mistaken. She has eloped!"

"Eloped! Do you know who you are speaking about? Who you are speaking to?

"You may rely upon what I say. You think it impossible for one of her character to take such a desperate step. But it is true. She has eloped with an idle, good-for-nothing vagabond——what's that?"

"Achee! Achee!" sneezed Lowe.

"A friend of mine, who is as deaf as a post. He cannot hear you. But if he could, I should not fear any damage to Lucy's character from your calumnies."

"Calumnies!"

"Achee!"

"Who is it? I've heard that sneeze at Babbleton."

"Never mind the sneeze. I say calumnies. Lucy is incapable of doing any thing to compromise her character, and I will not believe a word of it. But why are you so deeply interested?"

"Me? You know I love her!"

"Ay, as the wolf does the lamb!" Lowe had also informed her of Roland's beguilement of the player's daughter. He had it from Walter.

"I would marry her."

"You would?" said Wilsome, half abstracted by an amusing thought which flashed upon her mind. "Perhaps the girl may be in the city, and may be found. My coachman can ascertain. Sit down, and look over the paper. Excuse me for a few minutes. But if I produce her within the next half hour, you will pledge yourself to wed her?"

"Yes—that is—certainly, if—if she is——"

"If she will have you—say that," and Wilsome hastened away, through the hall, leaving Lowe, who had been suffering from the effects of a recent cold, and was remarked to sneeze very peculiarly, still occupying his position in the rear parlor, the folding-doors being nearly closed.

At the expiration of a brief space of time the mischievous old maid reappeared, and soon after a loud ring was heard at the street door.

"Is it Lucy?" asked Roland, his features relaxing.

"You shall see."

"Mr. Glass!" cried Snapper, throwing open the door, and ushering in the actor.

"Mr. Roland," said the actor, "where is my daughter? Tell me where my poor child is, and I will forgive the rest."

"I have not the custody of your daughter. Go, sir; you are mistaken. I pity your distresses, and am willing to relieve them. Here is a bank note. You are in error. Your daughter is not in my possession."

"Poor Delia!" said Glass, taking the money, however; "I fear she is lost for ever. You know Mr. Roland——"

"I do not; I tell you no! Leave me, now, and I will call and see if we cannot find her."

"I thought you were seeking for Lucy," observed Wilsome.

"Is she another one whom he has enticed away from the parental roof?" asked Glass.

"I entice no one. Leave us, Glass. I know an idle fellow who has probably——"

"Achee!" sneezed Lowe.

"Permit me," said Roland to Wilsome, "to throw open that door."

"You have my permission, sir; and I hope my friend in the next room will not be annoyed."

"He!" exclaimed Roland, upon beholding Lowe, who arose and came forward with a deliberate step.

"Is this your deaf friend?" asked Roland, casting a reproachful look at Wilsome.

"My hearing is not very acute," said Lowe, "since my exposure in the night air, at the country residence of Mr. Napoleon Winkle."

"I trust you will soon recover," said Roland, deeming there was no danger of a personal assault on such an occasion.

"My nerves are not at all affected," replied Lowe, with a steady gaze.

"But who is the idle fellow you alluded to?" asked Glass.

"Yes, let us know who you mean," added Wilsome.

"There are many such persons as the one I alluded to," said Roland, evasively. "But, Miss Wilsome, it does appear that you were not ignorant of the elopement of your niece. I presume she is here, and that she is protected by you. It is enough!"

"It is enough, sir, that *you* should be content," remarked Lowe, in distinct tones. "Miss Lucy has not eloped with any one. It is an unfounded imputation. And if such a report has been put in circulation, it is a base calumny; and I would willingly undertake to maintain what I say in the presence of its slanderous author."

"I have no particular concern in the matter. I——"

"Stop, Mr. Roland," said Wilsome; "did you not say you would marry Lucy?"

"No matter what I said! I see a plot has been concerted here for your amusement, and I trust it will be enjoyed while it may. Come, Glass, I'll go home with you."

"No, sir!" replied the indignant actor. "You have already made my hearth desolate."

"Fool! If that is your gratitude, give me back the money."

"You owe me a thousand times more than your purse can

pay. You have stolen my daughter, and my good name. My purse is mere trash——"

"Very true, Glass, very true. Very good! Good day, Glass."

And Roland rushed away.

"He's gone," said Glass, unfolding the bank note and reading the denomination. "He made a mistake, I am sure. He had two notes, and gave me the wrong one. I don't know whether I ought to keep this?"

"Why not?" asked Wilsome.

"This is more than he intended to give. This is a hundred dollar note—the other was a ten. He intended to give me the other."

"No matter," said Lowe, "he can afford it. And no doubt you will find use for it."

"True, sir; we are all poor—I mean the actors."

"I have often heard that said," remarked Wilsome, "but could never understand why it should be so."

"It is quite easy to account for it," said Glass. "Our salaries are small, and our expenditures are large. And such as myself, who am an American, the poorest of all."

"And does it follow because you are an American?" asked Lowe, with interest.

"It does. The managers and treasurers are Englishmen, and favor their own countrymen."

"But the audiences are Americans."

"True. But what of that? They don't know the English actors from the native born; and they don't often see the managers on the boards. They are generally the most unconscionable tyrants in the world; and if the people only knew them, they would not patronize them. But just now we are on half salaries. The great singers at the other house have carried the city, and our establishment has ceased to be the fashionable resort. The gratification about the matter is, that the British who oppress the Americans are themselves sometimes overcharged by the Germans, the Italians, and French artists. Just now the good people would rather pay five dollars to hear a German sing, than to witness a British play. American plays cannot be brought on the stage. My friend Pollen has been attempting it for two years."

"That is very extraordinary," said Lowe.

"But it is true," said the actor. "The only hope for an

American poet, is to study the indecencies of British society, and introduce lords and ladies in his play."

"You are very severe on my country——"

"What! are you an Englishman, Mr. Lowe?" asked Miss Wilsome.

"I must confess it was my fortune to be born in merry Old England. Nevertheless, I must acknowledge there is much justice in my friend's remarks. But the way to be redressed, Mr. Glass, is to carry the war into Africa. I have seen you on the stage, and like your simple, natural style of acting; and I have also seen your daughter, whom I believe to be capable of eminent success. Take her to London——"

"To London, sir?"

"Yes, to London. Be kind enough to furnish me with your address, and I will inclose you a letter for a friend of mine in England, who will be found able, and I doubt not entirely willing, to put you in the way of making a fortune."

"Sir, you speak like one in earnest, and one who may have the ability of performing what he promises. Here is my card, sir; and I shall be happy to see you at my humble abode."

"I will take an occasion to call, sir," said Lowe. Glass then departed, with a lighter spirit, and a heavier purse, than when he entered.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ARUMS AND CRUDLES GO TO CHURCH IN THEIR FINE DRESSES, AND ARE ECLIPSED BY PATTY O'PAN.

It was Sunday, a bright, beautiful, inspiring day, and every body in the village not belonging to the other denominations, seemed determined to attend the services in the ancient church, of which Mr. Audley was the rector, and in which the Winkles had worshipped their Maker for many generations. Lowe had visited the widow for the purpose of accompanying her to church, and to confound the gossips who were industriously circulating the report of his elopement with Lucy. Amused, rather than annoyed at the credulity and uncharitableness of

the people, he had secluded himself since his return from the city, and had seized an opportunity when no idle gazers were in the street, to cross over to the widow's cottage.

Walter was in high spirits. His mother had made known to him his sister's desire to have the place of her temporary abode kept a profound secret, and he had promised not to divulge it. But he was ignorant of the cause of her flight, and could only conjecture that it grew out of a desire to defer coming to a decision on the various matrimonial proposals which he doubted not had been made her. Lowe had even ventured to inform him, that the mysterious disappearance of his sister had given rise to a rumor of an elopement; at which Walter laughed very heartily, and begged his friend not to contradict it.

If one could have seen the hearts, and read the inclinations of the members of Mr. Amble's congregation that morning, it is quite possible he would have found a large proportion of them entertaining a desire to witness the humiliation of the occupants of the conspicuous pew of the Winkles. Some were merely curious; but more were exultant.

They determined to go to church at an earlier time than usual that morning, to see the remnant of the proud Winkle family enter after themselves, and proceed in dejected procession to the old pew. Besides, nearly every member of the congregation had to pass Mrs. Winkle's door on the way to church; and their triumphant smiles, and felicitous glances might be seen and comprehended by any of the family happening to be looking out of the windows. The Arums and Crudles in particular, who had been disappointed the preceding Sunday in the exhibition of their fine dresses and new bonnets, to a large audience, in consequence of a threatening cloud—which, however, had not deterred them from walking to church, although it had driven the curious gazers from the street—were now resolved to make a crushing parade of their earthly habiliments. Their faces were wreathed in smiles, as if an unwonted happiness had been reserved for them that morning. They were now the undisputed belles of the village, and the Winkles could never again "look down" on them, unless it were from their hiding-places.

It is not, perhaps, a singular idiosyncrasy of our nature to become more condescending and complaisant to those beneath us in the social scale, after we have levelled in the dust

all who have long towered above us. It was so with the Arums and Crudles. All little rivalries and jealousies that had existed between them were immediately reconciled upon the announcement of the elopement, and uniting their forces, they visited in turn every acquaintance they had in the village, for the purpose of spreading the joyful tidings. Many of their own sex, who had aspired to be their rivals in beauty and accomplishments, in the absence of wealth, and who had often incurred their enmity, were now familiarly accosted, and the news proclaimed to them. Even the shopkeepers' daughters, and some few of the mechanics' wives, were informed by the friendly belles of the horrible occurrence. And when they ceased the round of visits—and such incessant visiting had never been known before in Babbleton—they stood on their marble steps, or promenaded in front of their houses, and imparted the glad tidings to any familiar pedestrians.

At the ringing of the first bell a hundred doors flew open simultaneously, and the street leading past the widow's door to the church, was filled with men and women—mostly women. The Arums led the procession, followed by the Crudles. They flaunted the magnificent apparel, and the fantastic fashions, which had been ostentatiously but vainly displayed on the Sunday before, but which had not escaped the particular attention of Lowe, as will be seen immediately.

And Lowe, and Walter, and even the merry widow, were now delighted spectators. They were peeping through the Venetian blinds, themselves unseen.

On swept the leaders of fashion—and Patty O'Pan darted out into the street, and, accompanied by Bill Dizzle, swept after them. Her advent was announced by a universal outburst of laughter. The children, in particular, could not be restrained. Her dress was precisely similar to the costly ones of the Arums, and her bonnet and ribbons, and feathers and flowers, exactly the kind worn by the Crudles. Bill walked the curb, deeming it next to profanation to approach within six feet of such a gorgeous creation. He was dressed in his "Sunday best," and strove with all his might to manifest, by his carriage and gestures, his great admiration of Patty.

The Arums and Crudles gazed behind in amazement, and irrepressible anger, which was the signal for a louder outburst of merriment than ever. And then, discomfited, and agitated

with shame and mortification, they hastened to escape the odious comparison by vanishing out of public view. But even the church did not screen them, for Patty and Dizzle had obtained permission to occupy Mr. Dowly's pew, in full view of the congregation, and just across the aisle from the Arums. There was a buzz among the women; some angry looks; and many merry faces. Lowe and Miss Wilsome had done their work well; and the habiliments of the rich parvenus were so striking, and the imitation of Patty O'Pan so perfect and conspicuous, that the comparison was inevitable. Nor, indeed, did Patty have just cause to shrink from the scrutiny: for nature had bestowed on her a finer form than any of her contemptuous rivals could boast. But that did not prevent malignant whispers from circulating. She was every thing that was vile, and her master a monster of evil. Of course, no girl could earn in an honest way enough money to indulge such extravagancies; and the brazen impudence of such an exposure, and in a Christian church, was too abominable to be borne. Such were the thoughts of the indignant Mrs. Arum, and she wrote them down with her pencil on a card, and sent it to Mr. Amble by the sexton.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the minister, upon reading the note. "What is to be done? The church will lose the contributions of the Arums and Crudles, if she is not removed! What shall I do? Go, sexton, and tell this Patty O'Pan the pew she is in belongs to Mr. Dowly, who may arrive at any moment."

The sexton, after a short absence, reappeared before the anxious minister in the vestry room.

"She says she knows whose pew it is, sir; and that she applied for permission to occupy it, and obtained it. And she told me to mind my business, and not meddle with her affairs, sir."

"What shall be done?" continued Amble, wringing his hands. "Old John Dowly, poor as he is, gives as much to the church as any other man! Do try and get that Dizzle boy out."

"He shook his fist at me, sir!"

"He did! I'll pound them in my sermon! The pew shall be made a hot place for them; and I'll contrive to please the Arums and Crudles. Here, take these few lines to Mrs. Arum. To think this Patty's paramour once read

the service in my church! And that the Winkles, who built the church originally, have disgraced themselves!"

Another sensation was produced by the arrival of Mrs Griselda Winkle's equipage. She descended in great state, alone, being unattended by her lord, who was never a regular attendant at church, though a regular contributor to its treasury. She floated in, richly dressed, and sparkling with jewels. After bowing to the Arums and Crudles, and returning the smiles of others, she was startled upon taking possession of her pew, at the appearance of Patty O'Pan and Bill Dizzle in her immediate vicinity. Bill could stand it no longer, and in obedience to a *look* from the imperious bride, whose meaning did not admit of misconstruction, the frog-catcher slunk quietly out of the church, without even attracting the notice of Patty, so accomplished was he in the art of creeping about unobserved.

A few moments sufficed for one of the Arums to glide into Griselda's pew, and impart to her the news. The astonished bride glanced at the vacant Winkle pew, and then elevated her eyes in a sort of half exultant and half commiserating astonishment. She then frowned very fiercely at Patty, to whose splendid dress Miss Arum had next directed her attention. But Patty was better nerved than Dizzle was: thrust out her nether lip, in open defiance of the proud milliner. She even pointed significantly at her bonnet, meaning, perhaps, that Griselda herself was nothing better than a milliner.

Matters remained thus until every pew was occupied but the one where Lucy used to sit. No one ventured to go into it. But, just in time to avoid being too late to hear the first verses read, the widow Winkle appeared at the door with her usual merry smile. And she was attended by Lowe and Walter. They stepped forward deliberately, and occupied the vacant pew towards which so many glances had been cast. There was a silence, a sudden hush in the congregation, which the appearance of the minister had never produced. And there was one who knew better than Mr. Amble himself, who stood silent, or stupefied gazing at the widow's party, and particularly at Lowe, as if doubtful of his identity. And many others did the same wondering; after what they had heard, it could possibly be Mr Lowe himself. It seemed so. The Arums and Crudles could not deny it—and they ceased to cast their exultant glances about, and checked their significant smiles.

Indeed, from the apparent elongation of their chins, one might have supposed their pleasantries had been abruptly annihilated by some unlooked-for vexation.

The sermon was a dull one, for Mr. Amble was obliged to deviate from the subject he had selected with a view of indirectly referring to the recent occurrence, which had been the topic of his parishioners. He saw that there was some mistake in the matter; and there could hardly be any foundation for the report which implicated Mr. Lowe, since he had accompanied Lucy's mother to church. Nor did Mrs. Winkle's and Walter's placid countenances indicate that Lucy had taken any step calculated to plunge them in misery.

After the sermon, Griselda hastened out of the church and ordered the coachman to drive her home without delay. She was too wise to be identified with any of the parties until she could know precisely the true state of affairs.

The Arums and Crudles were again subjected to the mortification of having to share the admiration of the public with Patty O'Pan. And that the cause of their annoyance might not be absent from their sight, Patty chose, this time, to keep immediately in front of them, still attended by Dizzle at an awfully respectful distance from her elbow.

The Arums and Crudles did not attend the afternoon services, but remained at home venting their censures on the sexton, Lowe, Dowly, and even on Mr. Amble himself, as if it had been his duty to keep such cattle as Patty O'Pan in their proper places.

But in the afternoon Col. Oakdale's carriage drove up to the church-yard gate, and Walter had the satisfaction of seeing Virginia descend from it. He had stepped forward to assist her in alighting, but was anticipated by Roland, who had accompanied her and her father from the country. Walter shook hands as usual with Roland, being still profoundly ignorant of his wicked machinations.

The colonel, after his daughter and Roland had entered the door, plucked Walter aside, and encouraged him to persevere in his design of aiming a fatal blow at the fanatical reformers, at the great meeting to be held at the court-house in Babbleton on the following night. The colonel owed Roland some $10,000, and although they were opposed to each other in politics, of course friendly personal relations had always subsisted between them. And if the colonel himself did not

choose to come in conflict with his creditor on the stump, he had no hesitation in stimulating others to do so. Besides, it was supposed he aspired to a seat in the U. S. Senate, and the choice was to be made at the next session of the legislature. Walter promised to do his utmost; and the fact that Roland had monopolized the attention of Virginia, was not calculated to produce an abandonment of his purpose.

CHAPTER XIX.

PREACHING OF THE POET—SNOBSON'S RAPTURE WITH HIS SWEETHEART.

It was on Monday, in the afternoon, and at night Walter was to make his maiden speech before a thousand auditors. He sat beside his mother near the parlor window, gazing thoughtfully into the street.

"I am glad, Walter," said his parent, referring to the subject upon which they had been conversing, "that your brave heart is not appalled at the picture I have drawn."

"It will only stimulate me to greater efforts, mother. I see, now, the necessity of exertion to supply the deficiencies of fortune. My uncle, and even Aunt Wilsome, might be applied to successfully; but it would be repugnant to my feelings to demand assistance from either of them. Gusset will endeavor to secure my uncle's fortune for herself, and my aunt will marry; indeed, as I have told you, she would have been married before this, if my friend had not been devoid of the mercenary spirit which appears to have actuated Griselda. The future, truly, seems to be dark enough. I cannot hope to obtain Col. Oakdale's consent to wed Virginia. I am poor, and his estate encumbered; and besides, his creditor, Roland, the wealthy Roland, is in all probability a rival suitor. But I will not despair. Never fear that. I will, perhaps, be more thoughtful, and more observant of opportunities to make my way in the world than formerly, but I shall continue to be merry, nevertheless. I inherited it from you, mother, and a more valuable heritage could not have been bequeathed me."

"Yes. A merry heart is more likely to achieve success than a despondent one."

"I wish you could be present to-night! Burning thoughts are flitting through my brain. I feel that I shall make an impression on my hearers. No immediate benefit may result from it; but it will serve to convince you that my education was not in vain, and that depressing circumstances can never subdue my spirit!"

"I have high hopes of you, Walter. And I shall believe that whatever may be uttered by you to-night will come from the heart."

"It will, mother. I have long felt an urgent desire for an opportunity to aid in the annihilation of false projects, started by the demagogues to captivate the unreflecting understandings of the multitude. To-night it will be afforded me. I care not who may be offended, if I be the advocate of Truth, and the enemy of fanatics and fools. If Roland takes offence, Colonel Oakdale will be pleased. So in point of interest, even,—which, however, I should not regard,—I can have nothing to fear."

"'Be just, and fear not,' you know, is the recommendation of your favorite poet. But do not 'set down aught in malice.'"

"I am no man's enemy. See! yonder comes my friend Pollen! Mother, you know him. We will entertain him. He comes this way. His hat is old—it was new but yesterday—and his coat is soiled and buttoned up to the neck, as when I first met him. He is in distress, mother; and he might have been rich, but for his disinterested sense of propriety. Pollen! how do you do, old fellow?"

"Not very well, in purse and stomach, if you would have the truth; and nothing else can be extorted from me. May I come in?"

"The door is open; if not, break it down, or come through the window."

The poet had most cordial salutations from both the mother and the son. His hunger was satisfied, and he was furnished with the same shirt of Walter's he had worn on a former occasion, and which its owner had declared should never be used by any one else.

"Oh that I were an apostle, or other accredited ambassador of the Most High!" said the poet, upon occupying a

chair at the parlor window, and gazing at the people passing from the boat.

"Why, Pollen?" demanded Walter.

"I would go into the street, and erect another altar to the unknown God, and worship there. This generation of fools have forgotten their Maker, and bow only to the golden calf. Some think themselves honest and religious—and so did the silly worshippers of the false god. But they had Moses and Aaron to denounce their idol; whilst many of our monitors never fail to share the treasure, and beg for more! The great Creator made the gold; and if they worship the metal, instead of its author, it follows that the true God must be unknown. Therefore, I would erect another altar to the unknown God."

"Go on, Pollen," said Walter; "let your ideas flow freely under the inspiration of the hour. I may avail myself of some of them to-night."

"Money, money! We see the image of human faces on the coins and on the bank-bills. Wherefore? But I can see money in men's faces! Poetry is seen in the frensied eye; heroism in the calm lip and lofty brow; love in the languishing gaze; hatred in the frown, and pleasure in the smile, and as plainly as these are perceptible, I can distinguish the base image of the dollar in the faces of nearly all. I see approaching now a millionnaire. His face is very familiar. See his harsh gesticulation, and his rapidly moving lips. Would you not know his thoughts? I can read them."

"Read them," said Walter.

"He supposes himself to have been the most miserable man among the passengers on the boat. He is a usurer, and a speculator. Yesterday, if he had made a certain investment, when the opportunity offered, his income would have been greater than that of any man in the city. Now, the incomes of two or three surpass his, and he is truly miserable. But, fortunately, he has not the pride nor the happiness of the poor merchant following him. The merchant, although wielding thousands of money not belonging to him, is believed here to be wealthy. To undeceive them, would be destruction. In the city he expended $6,000 per annum—here, only $2,000, and still maintains a better style than most of his neighbors. Hence his happiness. Next comes a broker's clerk, who will tell you all about the banks, and the sum total of his disbursements yesterday. On a moderate salary, he

makes a better show, and is more respected than his landlord. The next in order, the shopkeepers and the mechanics—are more genteel in costume than the millionnaire. Their superiority consists in the fact that they chance to have semi-rural residences; while others of their class, less fortunate than themselves, are compelled to drag out a monotonous life in the city—ever languishing at their counters and benches. But money, more or less, is distinguishable in the faces of all. Where there is none, all is blank, or dark and gloomy. No—I see a few exceptions."

"The Quakers?" asked Walter.

"No, sir, no! I see, too, the approaching group of meek and pious Friends. I have seen them often. Money has made its deepest indentures on the faces of most of them. On the boat, or in the cars, their thoughts and words refer exclusively to the golden god. Buying and selling—the prices of commodities—the profits or losses on certain operations—the eagerness to acquire, the fear to lose; such are their topics! Religious, yet regardless of the decalogue; meek and inoffensive, yet practising usury; philanthropists, yet contemning all laws, human and divine, which do not accord with the secret promptings in their own breasts."

"You say nothing of the ladies," remarked Walter.

"It were best to say nothing. Pictures—mere pictures. The good are in Heaven! I know one who is there! No matter. Yonder doll will toss her head, and tell you her father is a banker. She need say no more. Worshippers will cast themselves at her feet,—I mean such as have a less share of the golden calf than herself. But yonder comes one who has more, and he ceases to worship her and turns away."

"Snobson!" exclaimed Walter, seeing the young man approaching alone. "But your exceptions, Pollen, who are they?"

"The contented farmer, or student, or the gardener, who delights in the perfect productions of nature——"

"Such is Dibble!"

"No matter. He is deservedly happy. The teacher, who is contented with a moderate salary; the calm philosopher; the innocent theorist; the man of imagination, who builds castles in the air, and inhabits them himself, provided he has a substantial larder; all who exercise the nobler impulses of the heart, enfranchised from the restraints imposed by the

golden calf. And such can only be the case in rural districts, where the air is uncontaminated. In the city, incessant money making must ever prevent the people from meditating on loftier subjects. Thus, you see the difference between town and country. Snobson is coming here."

"Yes; come in, Snobson!" cried Walter. "Don't hesitate. Pollen and I are alone."

"I'm glad of it," said Snobson, joining them. "I want to tell you how I've been made a fool of."

"Oh, you need not tell us that!" said Walter

"Have you heard it already? No—it would be impossible. But before I begin—it's all a lie, ain't it, about your sister eloping with Mr. Lowe? I know it is, for I just now saw Mr. Lowe enter his own door. The Arums and Crudles, I suspect, raised the report."

"Why, Snobson! how does it happen that you are so savage on the Arums and Crudles?"

"I'll tell you all about it. I was completely taken in, and fascinated, before I had time to think."

"The artful nymphs!" said Pollen

"You may say so—but they were outwitted at last, as you shall hear. I was bewildered with their playing, their singing, and their dressing. Don't they dress! And when they flirted their pretty little feet, I could not help, accidentally you know, seeing the magnificent borders of their petticoats. Parke was cooler than me. He don't mind such things. But I was carried by storm, as Sergeant Blore says. I was in a quandary. I didn't know which to have. They settled it, however. After a little hair-pulling in the next room, the victorious one, the youngest, came to me, and waited until I proposed. I was snapped up, and the matter was laid before our parents, who were perfectly willing, provided the conditions and terms could be made to suit them. What do you think our fathers proposed?"

"I dare," said Pollen.

"You are not far wrong. My father authorized me to say to Mr. Arum that my allowance of five hundred dollars per annum would be continued, and that my wife would be introduced into the society his family frequented—which is better than that she has been accustomed to."

"And what did her father propose?" asked Walter.

"Why, to defray one half the expense of furnishing a house for us!"

"And you were to live on love?" asked Walter.

"No—dollars!" said Pollen.

"Yes; and they were to come all from one side. He required my father to make me a partner in the banking-house, with a capital of fifty thousand dollars, and to introduce my wife and all his family to our friends! The expense of living was to be defrayed by my share of the profits, and he was to have one expensive daughter off his hands! That's what my father says. So, seeing I would have nothing more than my five hundred dollars—except the wife and the house—I backed out. It is too small a sum for two, and you know I have my boarding and lodging for nothing while single. I'll stay single, till one or the other of the old governors drops off."

"But what did the lady say?" asked Walter.

"She was as willing as myself to be off, because she had expected a large fortune all at once."

Tea was now announced.

CHAPTER XX.

A REFORM MEETING, AND WALTER'S SPEECH—BLORE'S ESCAPE FROM HIS WIFE.

The court-house was illuminated with gas and filled with people. The poor had been brought thither by the friends of Roland, and the rich had come for the purpose of hearing the son of their late friend, Mr. Winkle, who had been their respected representative in Congress.

Roland, at the conclusion of his speech, remarked that he had understood he was to be followed and replied to by his youthful friend, who volunteered to address the people in behalf of Mr. Plastic, his opponent. He requested that he might have a patient hearing, if for no other reason, as a mark of respect for the memory of his father, who had served his country well. But, at the same time, it should be remembered

that his lamented father had never been known to interpose any obstacles to the wholesome reforms demanded by his constituents; and there could be no doubt, if he were still alive, and present on that occasion, he would be found on the side of the people, and in opposition to his own son.

Walter rose up with a composed countenance, and thanked his more experienced friend for his handsome introduction of the son of his father; and the first sentence, uttered with a peculiar sort of gravity, produced a burst of laughter, which was not at all relished by Roland.

"Fellow-citizens," continued Walter, "I have listened, as you did, in silence and astonishment to the intimation of the speaker, that the son of my father was inimical to wholesome reforms. I deny it!" Great applause followed his denial. "On the opium question, I am prepared to denounce all who indulge in the excessive use of the drug. And as our courts have decided that the legislature have the power to prohibit its use as a mere stimulant, without the prescription of a physician, I have not one word to utter in opposition to such a law, although I cannot see precisely how my friend can serve his prohibitory friends in Congress, further than to pledge himself to abstain from the use of the narcotic poison during his abode in the federal city."

"Sir!" exclaimed Roland, "I do not use the drug at all."

"Neither does the son of my father," said Walter, amidst much laughter from the rich side of his audience. "I am prepared to denounce it. Its evils are monstrous and incalculable, and I am informed by a friend on my left, a gentleman whose name is not unknown to American or English admirers of genius——"

"Especially the English," said Pollen; "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country."

"True. I am informed, I say, that some of the brightest intellects that have illuminated the world by their works, have been prematurely darkened, and ultimately destroyed, by the pernicious stimulant. Such was the case with Coleridge and De Quincey—men, whose names can never die. To such an extent did Coleridge indulge, that the cost of the drug consumed by him amounted to seven hundred dollars annually."

"Huzza!" cried the zealous prohibitionists, "he is not

against us! Roland was mistaken!" Roland in truth was puzzled.

"Against you?" continued Walter—"No! So far from it, I am for reforming or abolishing every evil which afflicts our race. And if the law can reach one of them, I contend it may be applied to all."

"Certainly!" cried the zealous prohibitionists.

"Well, then; I hold in my hand a statement made by some of our most eminent medical professors, declaring that the wearing of thin shoes causes more diseases and death, than the use of opium."

"Prohibit them!" cried a great many.

"And, next to thin-soled shoes, the abominable practice of tight-lacing produces thousands of fatal cases of consumption."

"Abolish it! Make it unlawful for the women to be squeezed by any thing else than our arms!" cried the multitude.

"Such a law would, at least," said Walter, "be constitutional."

"Good!" said Pollen, amid hearty laughter.

"But if we have the power to prohibit such evils as I have enumerated, surely we possess the authority to reform the whole catalogue. Have we not?"

"Yes," was the almost unanimous response.

"Well, then, I will tell you what is the greatest evil suffered by man. It causes honest hearts to break, widows and helpless children to languish in hopeless misery; the good man to weep; the philosopher to complain; the poet to shiver; the watch-dog to howl——"

"What is it? Down with it!" cried many.

"It robs the virgin of her only priceless jewel; the noblest citizen of his honor; the honest laborer of his rest——"

"What the d——l is it?" cried a hundred shoemakers, and as many laborers on the railroad.

"It causes men to steal, to murder, to commit suicide, and finally ingulfs them in eternal perdition. It is POVERTY!"

"Down with it! down with it!" cried all but the rich, who were silent.

"This parent of evils," continued Walter, "may be removed as well as the rest, and on the same principle. I propose, therefore, that the organization of Reformers append to

their catalogue of measures the following resolutions. First: After the expiration of twelve months, it shall not be lawful for any man to possess over half a million of dollars, and the overplus shall go into the public treasury to educate, feed, and clothe the poor."

This was rapturously applauded by all but two or three, who frowned indignantly

"Second," continued Walter—"At the end of the second year, no individual shall possess over one hundred thousand dollars—the surplus to be applied as aforesaid."

This likewise was approved by nearly all present.

"At the end of the third year, no person shall have over ten thousand dollars."

A vast majority sanctioned this, and Walter was hailed as the greatest of all reformers.

"At the end of the fourth, no one shall possess more than one thousand dollars; but those who have contributed to the treasury, shall be permitted to draw upon it for the amount of their expenses, of whatever kind, incident to an economical and wholesome system of living."

"Huzza!" cried a majority, but not more than a majority; while the rest manifested their disapprobation by hisses

"After that," continued Walter, "no man shall possess over five hundred dollars——"

Here his voice was lost in the storm of hisses and groans that issued from all parts of the house; the opponents of any further reform being evidently in the majority.

"That's going a little too far," said a carpenter. "We, who go with our sleeves rolled up, have, many of us, more than that sum already, and we expect to increase it."

"No, my friends," said Walter with sudden impetuosity, "let us not stop short of a thorough reform. Let us eradicate the evils which have cursed every community in almost every age and country. Let us be Christians in reality; let us abolish individual titles—let us give up all into a common treasury and live in social equality, like a vast harmonious family, and be henceforth truly brothers!"

"That's d——d nonsense!" said the carpenter, the shoemakers, and the railroad laborers. "He would have us mess with the niggers!" The quakers fled away disgusted. In short, the condemnation of the resolutions was nearly unanimous.

"Be patient, fellow-citizens," cried Walter, with earnest enthusiasm, "until you have heard me through. I rejoice in the manifestations I have witnessed——"

"We have condemned you," said a voice.

"No, sir; it was announced that my speech was to be in opposition to the extravagant projects of the fanatical reformers, and I think it has not been without its effect!"

"Listen!" shouted the people. "He was not in earnest! He is not in favor of any such nonsense!"

"No, fellow-citizens, I am not in favor of any such mad schemes of reform. If all were equal in wealth and influence to-day, it would not be so to-morrow. God made men with unequal powers, as the mountains and trees are of unequal dimensions. And he who attempts to extirpate evil from the world, must become greater than the one who permitted it to exist, before he can expect to achieve success. Let our preachers and moral teachers denounce the vices they would suppress, and persuade such men as they can, to abandon them, for their own good, here and hereafter, as a matter of conviction and duty: but let them beware, that they do not erect an inquisition which will torture themselves! Human laws cannot prevent men from destroying themselves, and going to hell, if they see proper. Like the Jacobins of France, the silly reformers in our country, if they possessed the power, would, after destroying the fabric of liberty, and overthrowing the foundations of society, prey upon themselves. The same principle which would prevent a man from keeping opium in his house, would prohibit a rich man from possessing over a million of dollars, and a poor one from having more than fifty."

"It's all a humbug, I believe!" said the carpenter.

"It is worse than that!" said Walter. "For some of our preachers are becoming politicians, while the devil is driving away their flocks. Reform lectures are delivered by the lazy itinerants, who levy contributions; and books are published in the name of piety, and a pure morality, for a certain profit in money. The designing authors are patronized by the preachers, as moral teachers and laborers in a holy cause! thus making merchandise of religion, and presumptuously using the name of their Maker in vain! Hypocrites! who wear a mask of godliness for the purpose of making money!"

Colonel Oakdale, at the conclusion of Walter's speech, ran to him, and folded him in his arms. Great enthusiasm pervaded the entire assembly, and Roland was hooted out as a demagogue.

Walter, Pollen, and even Shobson, who turned pale and begged in vain to be excused, were carried amid shouts of applause on the shoulders of the people to the widow Winkle's mansion.

Old Mr. Dowly, who had been at the court-house, and heard every thing, had preceded the uproarious crowd to the widow's, and prepared her for their reception; and when the young gentlemen descended from the shoulders of their supporters, they were smilingly met by the happy American matron.

"Walter, my son," said she, after the echoes of the last round of cheers had died away, "I fear you have damaged the prospects of the reformers, and made Mr. Roland your enemy for life."

"'Be just and fear not,' you know, mother. But I considered him my enemy before."

"Why so?" asked both the widow and old John Dowly.

"Because he has been endeavoring to supplant me at the Colonel's," said Walter, in a low tone. "I did hope that Parke would be there to watch him. But he is in the city with Julia Nitre."

It was warm, and as the party sat before the open window they were startled, from time to time, by the voice of Lowe, housekeeper, who seemed to be searching for some one in the street, although the darkness was intense.

"Hit's hutterly himpossible for you to hescape me. Where hare you? You needn't try to hide. I know hevery har hof your head! Stand still, I say, hor I'll skin you alive when I catch you. Why don't you speak, hand let me know where you hare?"

"That is poor old Mrs. Edwards," said Mrs. Winkle. "Who can she be playing hide-and-seek with?"

Walter, who had discerned a singular thumping on the boarding, and also the voice, during the speech of Mrs. Edwards, began to suspect who it was the pertinacious woman was pursuing. And sure enough, the next moment the head of Sergeant Blore was lifted slowly above the sill of the window, and within a few inches of him.

"It's me. Don't give the alarm," whispered Blore. "She's in chase of me, and if I'm taken, she'll show me no quarter. I was afraid to ring. Here she comes! Help me in!" The window was low, and by dint of much struggling, and with the assistance of Walter, the old war-worn veteran succeeded in making a lodgment in the parlor.

"I must take my leave, now," said Snobson. "I hear the cars. Good evening, Mrs. Winkle. I did hope to have the pleasure of being entertained by Miss Lucy, and I am sorry she is away on a visit. Please give my respects to her when she comes home. Father says if the Arums had only the standing of the Winkles—but no matter—good night."

"He's an irreclaimable puppy!" said Pollen, as Snobson withdrew hastily. "*He* talk of being entertained, and about the high circles! Why, I have heard his grandfather was a porter on the wharf, and rolled about the sugar hogsheads in his shirt-sleeves."

"I received your letter, sergeant," said Walter, "and must apologize for not answering it. But you know I had to prepare my speech."

"I know—I know; and a famous good one it was. You gave the Jacobins a first-rate lashing."

"Sergeant," said Pollen, "how is it that you are a Frenchman in every thing but your nativity? Are you an American, or an Englishman?"

"An American, sir. My father was a sea-captain, and accompanied Napoleon to Egypt. I was with him, and ran away to follow the fortunes of the great general. I was hid two days in the pyramids, sir."

"That is a solution of the mystery. And I am told you were among the sufferers at Waterloo."

"I lost some of my limbs there, sir; but I always thought I had been extremely lucky, sir, by my losses there, until lately."

"The sergeant," said Mrs. Winkle, "thought he had lost Mrs. Blore in that engagement."

"I curse my evil stars," said Blore, "that she escaped. She is *Hinglish*, sir, as you might have known, if you had been listening a while ago."

"Oh, it was her I heard in the street?"

"Where's my usband? His he hat your ouse, Mrs. Win-

kle?" asked Mrs. Edwards, standing out in the middle of the street.

"Hist! Don't betray me, madam!" said the sergeant.

"Which one of your husbands, Mrs. Edwards?" asked Walter.

"My first husband."

"If your first husband be living," continued Walter, "I would advise you not to confess it. You may be liable to prosecution for bigamy, and you know the penalty."

This was succeeded by a long silence, and no doubt the old woman had retreated in alarm.

"Thank you, Walter!" said Blore. "I won't forget this good service. A discharge from your battery has effectually repulsed her. But I want to tell you the condition of the siege at your uncle's."

"What is the matter there, sergeant?" asked Mrs. Winkle. "You need not hesitate to speak—all here are my brother's friends."

"Why, you see, madam, we were making preparations to have the battle of Waterloo over again, when she—I mean the commander's spouse—countermanded it, and would not consent to the engagement, unless the general would first make his will. That was no unreasonable thing in itself, and he was perfectly willing to, if it could be done without giving her cause of offence. You know, madam, he never gives offence to any one, and especially to the ladies. And somehow or other his diplomatic wife has wheedled him most amazingly, so that he cannot resist her will. And when her will was made known, there was nothing for it but to embrace it in his will, although he said, and every one knew it before, that he loved Walter as his own son and heir. So I got Rawson, the Scotch lawyer, to join the conference, and propose a compromise, or modification of the articles, so that Walter should not be left out entirely."

"Very kind of you, sergeant," said Mrs. Winkle. "And what did Rawson suggest?"

"That in the event of the commander's death, all the personal estate, of whatever kind, should go to Walter, and the real estate to his spouse."

"That was a Scotch stratagem!" said Mrs. Winkle. "For I suppose he knew, that in the event of my brother's

decease, without children of his own, the real estate, by virtue of Mr. Winkle's father's will, must descend to my children."

"And so," continued the sergeant, in great glee, "the catamount would be cut out altogether! Yes, Bawson knew it—but the smart woman don't know any more about such matters than one of Bill Dizzle's frogs."

"I will not be a party to any such deception," said Walter. "If he were to execute such a will, and there should be an heir afterwards, it would be a fraud to possess the estate."

"You are the soul of honor, Walter!" said the sergeant. "But you know that woman stormed the garrison to get at the military chest—and she has no just title to any part of the treasures. You needn't have any thing to do with it, though. Only be silent. She keeps the will locked up, and I think as soon as it is signed and witnessed, she'll not care a bayonet how quick your uncle is killed. He knows all about the matter of the reversion, and is delighted at the idea of cheating the stinging witch. I believe he would be willing to die, just to witness her disappointment, if he could be certain he would have the power of seeing it."

"What, has he caught a Tartar?" asked Pollen.

"I believe he has," said Mrs. Winkle.

"Believe? Gad, he *knows* it!" said Blore. "She don't scold him, as my wife did me—and of course she don't strike him; but there is such a terror in her frown, such a misery in her cold looks, that he would submit to any thing rather than offend her. By some infernal spell or other, she has conquered him! If she but cracks her finger, he runs up to her like a cowed spaniel—if she puckers up her thin lips, he will abandon any resolve. Oh, it is a monstrous tyranny!"

"She must possess some supernatural power," said Pollen.

"She has the devil at her beck, sir!" said Blore. "Even the chickens, the bull, and the bull-dog, run away from her."

"No wonder, then," said Walter, "my poor uncle is obedient! But is it not strange, sergeant, that any brave man should be so craven as to submit to the constraint of a mere woman?"

"It is so!"

"Then why do you fear Mrs. Edwards, or Mrs. Blore, as she now may be called?"

"She's a h—llcat! She's not a woman—nor is your uncle's

spouse a mere woman! Lord bless you! wait till you are lashed to an ill-natured, keen-sighted, iron-nerved——"

"Oh, I shall profit by your example, sergeant, and keep out of their clutches."

"Do. But shall your uncle sign?"

"He must do as he pleases. I shall be content."

"Very well. That's all he wished me to ascertain. And when the preparations are completed, he desires you to witness the Waterloo field of battle. He means to show how the battle might have been won; and he'll want your assistance, and your friend will be welcome, too. Good night. I will scale the rear wall."

But the sergeant was commanded by the widow to remain, deeming it out of the question for him to attempt to return on so dark a night. He consented to remain till the first dawn of light in the morning, hoping to escape the vigilant eyes of his watchful enemy.

Walter and Pollen, the latter expressing a desire to visit Napoleon Winkle's country mansion, proposed to return with him in the morning as an escort. This assured the sergeant of his safety, and he expressed his gratitude in the language of earnestness. And after receiving the assurance of Mrs. Winkle, that it would be quite impossible for his dreaded wife to molest him in his new quarters, he retired to the chamber in the attic, which had been allotted him.

But he had not been long absent, before he rushed down stairs again, as fast as his wooden leg would permit, declaring that his wife, or some other infernal woman was in his room. Mrs. Winkle laughed heartily at the sergeant's narration of what he had seen by the light of the newly risen moon. She assured him it was only one of Biddy's gowns, hanging near the bed. It was removed; and then the sergeant closed his eyes with a sense of security.

CHAPTER XXI.

LOWE, WALTER, AND POLLEN PAY A VISIT TO GRISELDA. THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO FOUGHT OVER AGAIN BY NAPOLEON WINKLE.

GRISELDA only awaited the impending execution of the will for a perfect realization of her ambitious projects. For the present her own will was paramount, but she desired the consummation of a provision for the future.

Already, and in anticipation of the position and power, to which, from the first dawn of her good fortune, she plainly perceived she must arrive, she had consulted the best authorities in style and fashion, as to the mode of living and manners to be observed, by one in her enviable station. Of course, every thing was British and European. First, researches were made in her genealogical line, and it was found that one of her ancestors, two or three generations removed, had been a captain. He had been called Captain—whether it was in the militia, or on a ferry boat, or in the night watch, made no difference—she was the descendant of Captain Gusset; and as dead men tell no tales, she might say what she pleased in regard to his gallant exploits, without danger of contradiction.

Her pedigree established, all other impediments vanished. British novels taught her the mode of luxurious living, and the etiquette to be observed by a lady of her affluence. And besides, there were American writers—though foppish, fashionable—who had obtained access to the aristocratic circles of British society, and whose published volumes described the domestic habits of lords and ladies. From such sources Griselda learned when to retire, when to rise, what to eat, how to dress, and other small particulars of an aristocratic establishment. That it was desirable the fashions of Europe should prevail in our country, would be inferred from the fact that government did nothing for the encouragement of teachers of an indigenous growth, while the foreign authors, defrauded of their property, nevertheless had their sentiments expanded throughout the Republic, involving the readers in no further expense than the mere cost of paper and printing. And Griselda was only one among the millions who imbibed a relish for the effeminate and free enjoyments of life, such as

some of the British novelists demonstrated as being in vogue in the vicinity of Grosvenor Square, and other noted places in the west end of London.

It was, therefore, with feelings of most exquisite delight, that Griselda beheld Walter and his two friends approaching the mansion. Lowe, although the subject of dark suspicions, and sometimes of conjectures of an opposite character, was certainly a mysterious personage—but against whom nothing could with certainty be alleged. He was young and handsome—accomplished and generous; and these more than sufficed, as Griselda learned from the practice in Harley street, Cavendish square, for his reception in the boudoirs of the most distinguished American ladies. Pollen was a poet, and in all ages and countries, but ours, the poets were freely admitted into the best society. And Griselda resolved to contribute her mite, in condemnation and ridicule of every thing merely American. She had learned from Walter, that Pollen was read and approved in England; and that if he had but the means to defray his expenses thither, he would be immediately caressed by the Sutherlands, the Stanhopes, the Spencers, the Beauforts, etc. Walter, himself, when he chose to be smiled upon by her, had always been a sort of privileged pet of the retired milliner.

Refreshing her memory of similar visits in the fashionable novels, Griselda conformed to them as nearly as possible in the reception of the young gentlemen; and they soon had reason to be convinced they were heartily welcome to the hospitalities of the mansion.

"It was kind in you, Walter," said Griselda, when they were seated, "to think of your languishing friend, in her deep seclusion. I have just been reading one of Mr ——'s tales of the country enjoyments in England, and wondering why we did not imitate such pleasant examples. There is nothing to prevent it. We have here all the means of similar delights. Let us improve them. Promise me, all of you, that you will be my guests for a week or a fortnight, at the very least, and I will devise means for your amusement."

"What have you to say, Pollen?" asked Walter.

"I shall be perfectly willing to remain until driven hence. You know I have no fixed home—no regular employment—and if Mrs. Winkle will permit me to enjoy myself in my

own way when the fit comes on—and you can explain what that means—I shall be honored by her entertainment."

"No explanation is necessary," said she. "This is Liberty Hall. Do as you please. Command what you desire, and consider every thing your own. If a fit of composition, such as used to seize upon Lord Byron, should take possession of you, depend upon it, you shall not be disturbed. I should like, above all things, to read a poem in print, which had been written in my house."

"Very considerate, truly," said Lowe. "If the poet does not now consider himself invested with the freedom of the place, he can have no appreciation of handsome receptions."

"I thank you, Mr. Lowe, for your kind remark," said Griselda; "and I really wish you would spend a large portion of your time at the mansion, during the absence of——"

"Who?" asked Pollen. "The lord of the estate?"

"Oh, no! A certain young lady, who has mysteriously disappeared," replied Griselda.

"Do, sir," said Pollen. "The walks about the premises are silent and romantic, and adapted to passionate musing. I shall enjoy them. Oh, the joyous air, perfumed with roses! and the carollings of happy birds! I must rush out in their midst. Who will accompany me? Who will follow? Excuse me!" and he darted through one of the long windows descending to the floor, and crossing the lawn, disappeared behind a hedge of altheas.

Walter, leaving Lowe with his aunt, sought his uncle in the library. He was in the midst of charts and papers, with pen in hand, making a diagram of the field of Waterloo.

"Come to my arms, my boy!" he cried, embracing his nephew, and evincing the real delight his presence afforded.

"I am glad to see you so happy, uncle, and that you have resumed your cherished employments."

"Sit down. Wait a moment," said the old gentleman, tripping lightly across to the door, which he locked. "I am free, now," he continued, in a low voice. "How I became entangled in the silken meshes of matrimony, we will not dwell upon; suffice it, that I was bound hand and foot, but now am free. I kept a subtle poison about my person, to take in the last extremity; but that Scotch lawyer, Bawson, and our Blore, have extricated me from the clutches of her Machiavelian diplomacy."

"Could you not have ruptured the silken cord, uncle?"

"No, not at all. She made no hostile demonstration, but assumed at the beginning the attitude of superiority, and had the power to withhold or grant any thing, as I might conciliate or exasperate her. It is a mystery to you. But wait till a woman is appended to your neck! You will then find that whatever is yours, is hers, and that she may insidiously obtain the arbitrary direction of the whole."

"I should declare war, uncle, and turn her out of doors!"

"War against a woman? No, sir! All domestic wounds should be healed on the hearth-stone. But we have overreached her in diplomacy. Every thing is signed in the form the sergeant described to you. Bawson has been paid and dismissed and your aunt has the document safely locked up in the iron chest with the plate—your plate, Walter. Ha, ha, ha! If I could only witness her chagrin and disappointment, upon the discovery that she was outwitted and overreached in the partition of my effects, I would swallow the strychnine to-day. Ha! ha! ha! Blore is another Talleyrand!"

"I hope you may not be induced to commit an injustice, uncle. If there should be an heir——"

"Hist!" said his uncle, placing his lips to the ear of his nephew, and whispering. "Rely upon it," he continued, "and be at ease. I shall do no wrong. But I mean to enjoy my enfranchisement."

The repeated reference to his regained liberty, amused Walter, particularly when he observed so much caution and secrecy in his communications.

"If you have been really enfranchised, uncle," said Walter, "why do you remain in your cabinet?"

"Oh, I am just planning the campaign of the hundred days. I find fault with Napoleon's last operations, and I mean to demonstrate how his final calamity might have been averted. He should have first dislodged the British with bombs. Your mortar was the article I stood most in need of. I thank you for it, Walter. Rely upon my gratitude."

"I suppose, sir, you will not have to encounter any opposition from my aunt before entering upon this final campaign."

"Bless you, no! she seems to co-operate with alacrity, and promises herself much enjoyment. Since the signing of the treaty, there is a great change in her aspect. She says

the crops being all laid by, I may command the men in the territories; and Blore says they are eager for the fray. But between us, Walter," he added, in a whisper, "this concession on her part is attributable to the provision made for her in the event of my death; and I should not be surprised if she allowed me the utmost opportunity of being killed. Ha, ha, ha! And the silly woman thinking all the time she would be my successor in the government!"

"I must own, uncle, that were I in your stead, I should hardly be diverted at the contemplation of such an event."

"Pooh, boy, let danger fear us; then it ceases to be danger. That was Cæsar's motto. But who accompanied you? I saw two others approach."

Walter told him, and was pleased to learn that his friends would prove acceptable guests to the lord as well as the lady of the mansion, and his uncle immediately proposed repairing with him to the parlor, which was done; and Lowe had the satisfaction of enjoying a cordial reception. The old gentleman even united with Griselda in demanding a prolonged sojourn from the party, and pledged himself to contribute his best efforts to render them comfortable.

He was listened to in good humor by his spouse; and both to manifest her approbation of his courtesy, and to convince her guests that he was in the possession of perfect freedom, she requested him and Walter to go in search of the poet, that the honors of a cordial welcome might be repeated by the master (as she said) of the house.

As the host conducted his nephew over the grounds, he explained the advantages of the different positions and salient points in a military point of view, and indicated the campaign he had selected for his grand Waterloo exhibition. It was an extensive pasture, where vast flocks of sheep were grazing, and was traversed in the centre by the trout brook that meandered along Mrs. Winkle's premises in the village. On either side of the brook there was a gradual ascent, and behind the brow of the hill on the right hand, it was to be supposed that Wellington and his army sought a shelter.

"I will show you how the red-coats might have been routed from their hiding places," said the enthusiast. "But yonder is your friend, whom we have been seeking."

"Yes, uncle, and he is in one of his poetical moods, peopling the hills with the creatures of his imagination."

"A poet might easily fancy this the field of Waterloo, and behold every movement of the contending armies. Do not interrupt him. He may be enjoying the combat."

"Not he," said Walter. "He would never dream of that renowned conflict while gazing upon this lovely scene."

Pollen reclined on the hillside, in the shade of a hawthorn, and surrounded by sheep. His propped head had the motion of one improvising to imaginary shepherdesses, and his eye, dilated in abstraction, failed to distinguish any substantial objects.

As Walter and his uncle approached, they observed that a large ram, who had been watching the poet for some time, now became convinced that the oscillations of his head could be meant for nothing less than a banter to single combat; and disdaining to require odds against an invader of his territory, the leader of the flock, after stepping backward a few paces to acquire sufficient impetus in the assault, aimed a furious blow, which, if it had not been for the capacious hat of the poet, ascending high above his head, might have put an end to all his musings. Nevertheless, Pollen was slightly stunned, and rolled over on his face.

"Are you hurt?" asked Walter, running forward and lifting up his friend.

"I know not," said Pollen. "Was it an accident? Who threw the stone?"

"Stone?" iterated the old commander. "It was no stone. It was yonder Saxon, and he shall be restricted in his territory, if he persists in committing such wanton aggressions. Rely upon that. I believe I have the honor of shaking the hand of Mr. Pollen, the poet," continued the old gentleman, "and I wish to unite with my spouse in a proper reception of the friend of our nephew. You will oblige us, Mr. Pollen, by protracting your stay with us to the utmost limits of your convenience."

"It will afford me great pleasure, sir, to gratify your wishes, and to contribute to the general enjoyment. But I trust I shall not be fated to encounter many such Saxons as this in my rambles."

"No. He is an impudent fellow, and shall be arrested."

"Oh, don't punish him on my account," said the poet. "They call me hard headed, and I doubt not he feels the effects of his temerity."

As they passed through the orchard, the poet, who lingered a few paces in the rear, was assaulted by a turkey-cock, who brushed the ground with his wings, and strutted up to him.

"I presume," said the poet, repulsing the charge, and listening to the gobble of his discomfited assailant, "that he is a Musculman."

"I think so," said Walter; "and I believe the boar inhabiting the woods over yonder to the north, is in the habit of making incursions on his territories. But I think my uncle's most formidable enemy is John Bull, whom you may see beyond the marshes."

"I perceive what you are leading to, Walter," said his uncle, in good humor, "but I care not who hears it. Mr. Pollen, I had an adventure — a perilous one — with my neighbor over yonder, which, perhaps, may not have reached your ears."

"I have not heard it, sir," said the poet.

"I cannot narrate the occurrence so graphically as Mr. Lowe, who witnessed it, and, indeed, participated in the combat. He will relate the affair to you when we return. How now, Blore?" continued the commander, being confronted by the sergeant, who stood under the spreading apple-tree.

"If it please your honor," said the sergeant, touching his cap, "the men would take it as a great favor to be permitted to parade on the lawn, and for you to review them there."

"Too hot, too hot, and I'm too fat, sergeant, but you may drill them."

"Yes, sir," said Blore, with another military salute; and turning away, he marched towards the garrison at Boulogne.

In due time the dinner was announced, and a magnificent repast it was, for the mistress of the house, always fruitful in resources, even in her days of indigence, was now possessed of ample material to have feasted a score of lords.

The host, upon re-entering the parlor had fallen into a most interesting conversation with Lowe, who had incidentally, in discussing the merits of the British at Waterloo, made the remark that it had been a mournful day for his family, inasmuch as his father had fallen on that fatal field.

Griselda had attracted the particular attention of Pollen, by some premeditated compliment on the merits of a certain

poem; and not being able to quote it from memory, she was nevertheless enabled to turn to the page, and thus demonstrate to the poet the fact that his name had not been unknown at the mansion previous to his visit thither. So, when they arose to proceed to the dining-room, she was escorted by the poet, and it was the first time in her life she had ever taken a gentleman's arm when proceeding to the dining-room. But such was the fashionable custom, and Walter looked in vain to discover any signs of embarrassment in his newly elevated aunt; and he was by no means piqued to find her not deficient in the etiquette of the table. It was at his suggestion that Griselda purchased the book, and placed it on her centre-table; and he had the satisfaction to learn that the Arums and Crudles had followed her example.

And in this manner, if we may be allowed a brief digression, were the Vicar of Wakefield, and Miss Gurney's first novel, rescued from oblivion. A few wealthy admirers brought them into notice by their honest commendations, or, perhaps, they might have been lost for ever to the world. On the slightest incidents sometimes depend the most momentous results.

The poet, therefore—for Griselda had perused his volumes with interest and pleasure—found an attentive listener, and the conversation, always brilliant when he was in the vein, became lively and contagious at the table. Walter, alone, seemed isolated, and could only fire a random shot occasionally. But he had contrived a stratagem in concert with Sergeant Blore, which he did not doubt would afford some amusement; and not knowing precisely when the expected announcement would be made, and having a voracious appetite, he discussed the viands heartily while the rest enjoyed their conversation.

"And so your father fought and fell on the field of Waterloo?" said Mr. N. Winkle to Lowe.

"He did," was the laconic reply.

"On which side, Lowe?" asked Walter.

"On the side of his country."

"You are not, I think, a Frenchman; nor did I know before that you were not an American. But no matter," added Walter, with a kind smile, "a man's a man for a' that."

"I do not remember the name in the lists," said Mr. Winkle, "but, perhaps, he was not a commissioned officer."

"But he was," said Lowe. "The British officers, however, often have many names, and the one by which my father was designated differed from mine."

"No matter for the name. The British fought like heroes; and whatever was the grade of your father, his deeds on that day deserve a monument."

"He was a colonel, and has a monument." Lowe's voice fell, and he seemed to make a confidential communication to his entertainer.

"It must be the most delightful of pursuits," said Griselda to Pollen; "and the author should be the happiest of mortals."

"He *should* be, undoubtedly," said the poet; "but he is the most miserable!"

"Why is it so?"

"Because, in every instance where there is genius, or superior merit, the author is the victim of the tricks of the trade, or the malignity of the envious, or of a combination of critics whom he has failed to conciliate. By some means or other, the door of the temple is barred against him, and blind fortune is cajoled from his path."

"Truly, I was not aware of it," said Griselda, manifesting much interest in the subject.

"And that is not all," continued the poet. "The failure to achieve success might be borne by men of genius, with equanimity. They find enjoyment in the worlds of their own creation. But they are often doomed to languish in neglect, and behold others, infinitely their inferiors in every respect, win both fame and fortune. That is the source of their greatest unhappiness. They feel, they know, that when their ephemeral rivals shall be forgotten; when the turf shall cover their persecutors and enemies; when the purifications in the lapse of time shall have dissipated the foul vapors that obscured the stars; and—I shall not pursue the subject. Why should I? What boots this consciousness of a literary resurrection? It is madness! It is h—ll! It is this which constitutes our misery! The plaudits of future generations cannot reach us in the grave—our fleshless skulls cannot be conscious of the sounds of praise! And those who withheld from us a substantial reward whhile living—and who mocked

at our calamity—will be buried too deeply in oblivion to be branded as oppressors. Their names will have been utterly forgotten."

At this juncture, and when Walter had completely dined, the company were startled by the precipitate entrance of Bill Dizzle, with open mouth and protruding eyes.

"Well? well?" said Mr. Winkle, dropping his knife and fork, and leaning back in his chair.

"The water was down," said Bill, "and I was arter a snapping-turtle in the spatter docks——"

"Well? Go on."

"I heard a great splash behind me——"

"Go on!"

"And the tarnation British John Bull was arter me, and the whole drove of cows and heifers was following him. I split for the shore, and they splashed arter me. I got out and run, and they run arter me—into the meadow and out into the pasture—and there the Saxony ram met me and gave me a tremendous butt!"

"What? are they in the pasture?" cried the old gentleman, rising. "Sound the alarm! Where's Blore?"

"He sent me here, while he aims the cannon. But all the cattle are now licking some salt they found on the ground." This had been Walter's work.

"An invasion! I'll mount!" said Mr. Winkle.

"Hear me!" said Griselda, rising, while Mr. W.'s arm was still upraised. "You are soon to have the Waterloo battle over again, are you not?"

"Yes, my dear, you consented to it," said her lord.

"Very well. You must have the British on the field before you can engage with them; and they must come upon the continent before they can reach the field. Let them remain where they are, until your preparations are completed."

"Certainly," said her lord, lowering his arm. "Yes, let them remain," he continued, resuming his seat. "To-morrow we will give them battle."

"I hope, however," said Griselda, "you will not injure the poor animals."

"The bull must be separated from the rest," said Mr. Winkle.

"Why? I don't believe he has harmed any of them, or they would not have followed him to the salt. Besides, have

they not been on the island with him for several days? I do not think the poor fellow deserves the punishment you have been meditating."

"Did he not toss me into the ditch?" asked the old man.

"And I thought it was a frog as big as a ox," said Dizzle.

"But you had fired on him. To-morrow, or whenever you encounter him again, remember that he is no coward," said Griselda, smiling.

"I will remember his conduct on the former occasion!" said the commander.

Walter's anticipation of a boisterous episode was not realised. Griselda had the power of controlling his uncle, and calming his military frenzy.

The next day, however, both sides of the great pasture were lined with men and boys. Here and there an old cannon of small calibre was pointed from the opposing extremities of the field towards the centre. Another mortar had been procured from the city, so that the contending armies might be upon an equal footing. Altogether, some fifty old muskets and fowling-pieces were collected; but the men were forbidden the use of lead. The mortar, to be directed by Napoleon in person, was to throw its wooden balls; and the British beyond the crest of the opposite hill, were to watch them, and of course avoid them. The one which was to reply to it, was to be aimed by Walter; but he was not to be permitted to throw back the balls, as his uncle, not so acute of vision as himself, might not be able to elude them. He could reply only with wrapped paper balls, with just a sufficient weight of sand to project them across the field.

The old gentleman was mounted on his champing steed, and seemed to scan the armies through his glass, with the interest and energy of a general upon the eve of a momentous conflict.

Griselda, attended by the poet, occupied a position at a short distance from the scene of the impending struggle, and out of range of the missiles, where she could witness all the transactions of the day.

The signal was given for the attack, and the cannon on the old commander's side of the field were discharged, which threw the flocks of sheep and cattle, occupying the intermediate space between the contending parties, into considerable

confusion. The enemy not replying, being ensconced behind the brow of the opposite hill, Mr. Napoleon Winkle ordered his engineer to throw some bombs in their midst. But the engineer, pro forma, not being skilled either in mathematics or mechanics, had omitted to point the mortar at a sufficient elevation, and hence the wooden ball was projected in a horizontal direction; and tending downward by its own specific gravity, fell among the sheep. It struck the large ram on the tail, as that member happened to be momentarily elevated, and broke it. The poor animal baa-ed in pain, and ran away towards the crest of the hill occupied by the British, and was followed by all the silly flock.

"Now's your time, Blore!" cried Napoleon. "Charge them at the head of your column, under cover of the cloud of dust raised by the sheep."

Blore drew his sword and led the attack, followed by a score of men, and preceded by the sheep. The enemy had not discharged the first gun yet, and some of the novices following Blore, expressed a belief that they were either killed, or had taken to flight.

But just when the old ram and his party had reached within a few paces of the crest, Lowe, who was with Walter, cried out, "Up, and at them!" which was followed by the sudden uprising of twenty men and boys, and a rattling discharge of all their pieces that would go off.

The sheep, utterly astonished, and hopelessly panic-stricken, turned and fled, still following their leader, who had been completely blinded by the discharge of a fowling-piece. With his eyes closed and his face blackened, the old ram, in the desperation of his retrograde movement, fell upon Blore and his advancing column. All was in confusion—leaping, tumbling, rolling. The men were overthrown by the sheep. The sheep, imitating the motions of their blind leader, who, supposing obstructions were besetting every foot of the way, at each alternate spring leaped high in the air, as if clearing the bayonet of a soldier. It was irresistibly diverting to see the whole flock leaping up continually when there was nothing to leap over: they followed the example of their blind captain, doubtless supposing he had a good reason for what he did.

The attacking party, under Blore, was completely overthrown. Rolling over each other, and the sheep bounding over all, while the enemy continued to pour upon them an in-

ceasant tempest of cannon and musketry, they scampered away in all directions, pale and covered with dust. The sheep, still following their blind leader, rushed among the cattle under a clump of hawthorns, near the brook, about midway between the armies. The old bull, bellowing and throwing up the earth with his feet, commenced an assault on the fugitives. The poor creatures were tossed up like the balls of a juggler. Two or three at a time were poised in the air. They bleated distressfully. The bull bellowed, the cows lowed, the pigs squealed, the geese squalled, and the cannon thundered.

Blore was the last of the assaulting party that returned. Whether it was attributable to his surpassing contempt of danger, or the difficulty of traversing the field with his wooden leg, no one seemed curious to know.

"That was a bad business, Blore," said Napoleon. "I am ashamed of you."

"It was not possible to do more, sir," said the sergeant, deprecatingly; "we charged up to their guns——"

"Why didn't you spike them?"

"Because they had reserved their fire, and then discharged their pieces in our faces, sir; and when the smoke cleared away, we had not a man on his feet, sir. Every one had fallen, sir!"

"Very well, Blore. Rally the men, and form another assaulting column. Have them in readiness out of range of the enemy's guns. I will pour another shower of shells among the rascals ensconced behind the crest of the hill."

The mortar was worked with surprising energy, and the balls were now thrown in the right direction, and gave employment to Walter and Lowe, and their party, in watching and eluding them.

But the one of all others the most severely exercised, was Bill Dizzle. He was mounted on a wild colt, carrying a large basket in his hand. It was his duty to watch the wooden balls when they fell, and return them to the battery from which they had been thrown, to be used again. Thus was he kept flying from one side of the field to the other.

The cannon and mortars were discharged incessantly. The ground was canopied with smoke, and the pasture really smelt like a field of battle.

Walter and Lowe aimed to blow up the old gentleman's

ammunition wagon, standing in the vicinity of his mortar. By inserting more sand in their paper balls, and by experimenting with their charges of powder, they were enabled to calculate with some accuracy where their burning missives might be made to fall; and soon it required the constant attention of several men to extinguish the sparks that were scattered in the near vicinity of the powder.

During all this time the bull was tossing the sheep about, and trampling on the pigs and geese, while several dogs, belonging to the neighboring farms, were barking at his heels.

"Bring up your reserves!" cried Napoleon. "We have silenced their guns. March in the shape of a wedge, or a triangular flock of wild geese, and penetrate to their rear. Let nothing arrest your progress this time."

Blore advanced at the head of his geese to execute the command, under cover of the batteries, and avoiding the ground occupied by the cattle. When they had ascended the opposite hill nearly to the summit, the fire from the swivels and the mortar ceased, for fear of injuring friend as well as enemy. An ominous silence prevailed in the ranks of the assaulted party, which lay concealed behind the crest of the hill.

"Now, lads!" cried Blore, when within a few paces of the crouching enemy, "remember there is no lead in their cartridges: and, for the honor of our commander, and in revenge for being run over by the sheep, let us seize their guns, and drive them from the field. Down with your bayonets! Charge!"

Then Walter and Lowe, with all their men, rose up and poured a volley in their faces. If they did not have lead in their guns, still they peppered their assailants; for an ounce of pulverized pepper had been inserted in every cartridge.

"Fury!" cried Blore. "What the d——l's this? Never mind it, soldiers! Shut your eyes and rush upon them!"

But it so happened that each one, and the sergeant among the rest, had involuntarily faced about upon being peppered, and now, in the supposed execution of the valorous command, the whole party charged in the opposite direction, amid the shouts of the enemy and the loud laughter of the hundreds of spectators, who had been attracted to the scene by the continuous discharges of guns.

"On, soldiers, on!" cried Blore, slashing the air with his

sword, and urging his blinded column down the hill, unconsciously retreating before the enemy, and yet under the supposition that they had surmounted the crest of the ravine and were descending on the opposite side.

In vain did Napoleon shout to them to return to the assault. No order could be distinguished in the confused roar of mingled sounds. In vain was Dizzle despatched over the field with a written order. The sergeant could not open his eye to read it; and in reply to Dizzle's repetition of the order which had been uttered by the commander-in-chief, Blore only urged his men the more furiously downward. When they reached the brook, they fell headlong in it. They scrambled out unhurt, wondering they had never observed the stream before in the rear of the enemy's position. But now the line was broken, and the discomfited party were irretrievably scattered in different directions, and about one half of them were made prisoners and conducted to the rear of the hostile army.

"Blore! It's me—it's your general!" cried Napoleon, riding up to his second in command, regardless of the balls of burning paper that whizzed by his head; Walter and Lowe having renewed the fire from their batteries. "What is the matter, Blore? Why have you returned in this manner?"

"I can't tell, sir," said the sergeant, rubbing his eye, and obtaining a partial view of the disastrous posture of affairs. "It's some new invention, sir, that Walter never told me about. They are always getting up something new to surprise the old folks. Every one of us, sir, made stone blind! We thought we were in the enemy's camp when we tumbled into the water. It could not be helped, sir. But the water has washed away some of the infernal powder!"

"Rally them once more, Blore. Bring up the old guard. We must take their battery, and then the battle will be won. Stand by your guns! See to the mortar!" cried Napoleon, in great excitement, seeing the bull approaching, followed by the cows and sheep

A burning ball from the enemy's mortar, had lodged upon one of the horns of the bull, and the smoke and pain from the sparks had exasperated him to such a degree, that he resolved to storm one of the batteries himself. That of Napoleon being the nearest, he charged boldly upon it. The mortar was depressed as he approached, and fired when he was within a few

paces of it. It took effect upon his massy forehead, and was shivered to splinters. But Johnny was stunned, and brought to his knees. He shook his head in pain, closed his eyes, and snorted aloud. However, before the mortar could be recharged, he had recovered his feet. He had no thought of retreating. On the contrary, amid the shouts and yells of the spectators, he returned to the charge, and bellowing most furiously, with his head down and his tail erect, rushed upon the mortar and dislodged it. The men that had served it were overthrown and put to flight. Napoleon himself attempted to stand his ground, and slashed away with his sword But his horse became ungovernable, and fled away, followed by the bull, who kept his eye upon the well known red sash

"*Tout à présent c'est fini! Sauvons-nous!*" said Pollen, when the flying chief paused near the platform where the poet and Griselda were seated.

"No, sir—no! It is my sash he wants, and he shall have it," said Napoleon, reining in his steed, and detaching the silken trophy from his body, which he threw upon the ground. He then wheeled away, and returned by a circuitous route to the battery, and was received with cheers, while the bull was ploughing up the earth under the sash.

"What ridiculous nonsense for men to engage in," said Griselda. "It might do for children. I am weary of it. Let us return to the mansion."

"Presently," said the poet. "Walter has something else in reserve. He may cure his uncle of his military distemper."

"His uncle will be killed in some of these mad enterprises I look for nothing else, and am prepared for it. What are they doing now?"

Griselda observed that the mortar directed by Walter and Lowe had ceased to throw paper balls, and they were doing execution with another sort of missile, of a more consistent substance. These were pumpkins, which had been obtained from a neighboring field, and one of them had burst upon the head of the bull, and blinded him. The furious animal, not able to see from whence this last assault proceeded, was at length stricken with terror, and ran away. He never paused until he had regained his own territory on the island. The rest of the cattle were scattered in divers directions, lowing piteously. The sheep lay panting under the hawthorns.

"There goes another," said Pollen. "Let us watch it."

It made a handsome curve, and came down *squash*, on the bald head of Napoleon, overwhelming him with the seeds and other soft contents of the fruit.

"Astonishing!" said Griselda. "I thought any thing falling from such a height on one's head, would produce instant death. But he does not seem to be at all injured by it."

If he was not injured, he was blinded for a time, and ceased to take any note of the progress of the battle. Observing this, Lowe and Walter ordered a charge, and in turn assaulted their opponents at the point of the bayonet. The guns and the mortar were carried; and to crown the victory, both Napoleon and the sergeant were made prisoners.

Thus ended the day's sports, which were followed by a sumptuous repast, which had been ordered by Griselda.

CHAPTER XXII.

SENSIBLE CALCULATIONS OF THE GIRLS—A DEAD RAT.

The sojourn of the young gentlemen at the Winkle mansion in the country was continued for more than a week, and Griselda did every thing in her power to make the time pass agreeably. She had invited the eldest of the Arum and Crudle sisters to her house, hoping by this means to increase the pleasures of her guests. And the heiresses had accepted the invitation, for it was not often they could meet with such intellectual society as might be anticipated on such an occasion. They could have no idea that Walter and Lowe had ever heard of their detracting remarks; and they were not averse to the re-establishment of friendly relations with them, as the common guests of the now rich and fashionable Griselda. It was true that the mystery of Lucy's absence had never been satisfactorily solved; but it could be no source of discontent to the young ladies, that one so universally admired remained away. That Lowe had not eloped with her, was certainly a demonstrable fact, and his presence was an obvious refutation of the slander which had been circulated by Roland. Besides, the apparent friendly terms which still subsisted between Walter and his uncle, might be an indication that the

young man's prospects for the future were not entirely destroyed.

As for Griselda herself, her conduct since her marriage had been marked and commended by the Arums and Crudles. She had cut all her poor acquaintances except such as might be of immediate use, and had sought the intimacy of the rich or the fashionable.

But although the girls were quite delighted with the company of the young gentlemen, and exerted their powers of fascination to enthrall them, yet it might have been easily perceptible that they had no design of forming a matrimonial entanglement with the precipitancy which had characterized the case of young Snobson, whose father was so exceedingly wealthy. In their thoughts, and even in their conversation, when alone, the merits and pecuniary prospects of the young men were freely discussed. Walter might prove worth catching some day, and their bearing towards him was to be governed in view of such a contingency. Lowe was a mystery, and most young ladies are fond of mysteries. If no one knew any thing about him, how was it to be ascertained that he might not really be the possessor of an ample fortune? He was certainly handsome and accomplished, and seemed to be familiar with the manners and habits of the most aristocratic circles. It was prudent, therefore, to maintain friendly relations with him in reference to any developments which might be exhibited in the future. But as for the poor poet, his was a hopeless predicament. No one of his unlucky avocation had ever been known, so far as the information of the Arums and Crudles extended, to win distinction and influence in society based upon the only foundation of which they had any conception—viz., fortune. But he had access to the wealthiest families, and he might immortalize a young lady's name in a poem, and hence they condescended to be amiable, and to amuse themselves by their praises of his genius. But if he had possessed the genius of a Shakspeare, and had been devoid of fortune, not one of the Arums or the Crudles could have entertained for a moment the idea of marrying him. But Griselda, on the other hand, although irrevocably disposed of in matrimony, made unceasing efforts to gratify his vanity. This, she learned from British novels, and from American writers who imitated the European authors, was the practice of the high bred and aristocratic ladies of England. In truth, so affectionately did

she sympathize with him in his real or imaginary wrongs, and in the often-expressed desire to possess the pecuniary ability to conduct a magazine under his own control, that she insisted upon his becoming her debtor for a sum sufficient to defray the expenses of the first number of the periodical. Pollen, as may be supposed, readily acceded to the request.

"Meantime the election had taken place, and Roland had been defeated, as was predicted by John Dowly. Mr. Plastic the opposing candidate was returned by a large majority, and he had the candor to acknowledge his obligations to Walter, whom he sought at his uncle's mansion. He not only owned that he was indebted to the young man for his election, but declared his purpose to serve him when he arrived at the federal city. Colonel Oakdale was elected a member of the State legislature, and his subsequent election to a seat in the United States Senate was deemed highly probable.

Roland bore his disappointment and chagrin with an assumed equanimity of temper, but with a secret determination to be revenged on the author of his defeat. He had reason to believe that Walter had been long enamored of Virginia, Colonel Oakdale's daughter, and he could not avoid a supposition that the partiality was reciprocal. But a desire to exempt the lady from unhappiness, was not so powerful a motive in his breast as the inclination to punish the young man; therefore he resolved to put his scheme in immediate execution.

It was while Walter still remained at the Winkle mansion, that Roland made one of his formal visits to the colonel's residence. If the colonel at first regarded his visitor with dread and apprehension—for it occurred to him that he might demand the payment of the debt of ten thousand dollars under the sting of his political disappointment—he was soon undeceived; and upon observing that the attention of his guest was bestowed almost entirely as usual upon his daughter, he manifested his delight in every conceivable way, and assured Roland that no one could be a more welcome suitor than himself. To manifest his approbation, and his confidence in the unsuccessful candidate, the colonel proposed to sally forth alone in quest of woodcock, his favorite game. Roland made not the slightest objection, and impatiently awaited his departure.

One of the colonel's most remarkable peculiarities was a passion for the fresh air of heaven; and hence his desire to

be in the woods and fields as much as possible. And if he was delighted to be out in the wholesome atmosphere where he could enjoy the perfumes of blossoms, it followed very naturally that he had a nose peculiarly sensitive to unpleasant odors. On the very morning of the arrival of Roland at Oakdale Hall, the colonel imagined that something offensive and deleterious was concealed about the house, which sent a disagreeable effluvium into most of the apartments. He had on his velvet hunting coat, and held his gun in his hand, when the stench became so great, that he paused, and ordered every one in the house to seek the cause of the insufferable annoyance. It had not been discovered, however, before the departure of the colonel.

The colonel, by a natural conjuncture of ideas, while striding over his grounds, and meditating on the importance of securing an ample provision for his daughter, bethought him of his young protegé, Walter Winkle, and of the many instances of his manifestations of approval of the intimacy that subsisted between him and Virginia. Now, if Roland had any serious idea of a matrimonial alliance with his family—a political one was out of the question, and the colonel would have perished at the stake before violating a principle—it was plain that no such purpose ought to be entertained by Walter. He despised Roland's politics, he approved Walter's principles. But the one was rich and the other poor, and Walter as a rational creature, and as the friend of Virginia would see at once the benefit the young lady would derive by a rejection of his hand and an acceptance of Roland's. The colonel, accustomed to see his views instantly adopted by all within the sphere of his influence, did not deem it necessary to conjecture what might be the opinion of his daughter on the subject. But he determined to confer frankly with Walter, and for that purpose he directed his steps toward the Winkle mansion.

Walter was lounging in the portico when he saw the colonel approach with his dog and gun. He started up with some sort of delight, for he was growing weary of his aunt's hospitalities. Pollock had gone to the city to issue the first number of his magazine; Howe was spending most of the pleasant hours of the day creeping about, or with Bill Dizzle, through the bushes on the margin of the brook, in pursuit of the trout; Napoleon was planning new campaigns, and the Arums and Crudles were

detailing the enjoyments they anticipated the next winter in the fashionable circles of New York, whither their parents had agreed, for the first time, to permit them to sojourn for a brief season, in imitation of certain belles whose fortunes had been inherited.

"Get a gun and come along with me, Walter," said the colonel.

"Willingly," replied Walter. "But come in and have a glass of water, while I am selecting a gun."

"Yes, Colonel Oakdale!" cried Griselda, "come in. Bring ice water. Sit down, colonel. You know my guests."

"To be sure I do. They are famous throughout the country."

"Oh, la, Colonel Oakdale," said the young ladies, "what a flatterer!"

"Not I. Curse the water—that is, the water alone—" said the colonel, to the servant. "Bring the brandy. I know the law don't allow me to drink it—but am I not a law maker?"

"And a law breaker," added Miss Arum, laughing heartily at the joke.

"Yes," replied the colonel, drinking, "and a law breaker. It proves what I have always said, that nothing could be more demoralizing than to enact laws which will not be observed. It breeds a habit of violating the statutes, and the ultimate consequences may be more calamitous than the reformers are aware of."

"No doubt you are perfectly right," said Griselda. "But colonel, why has not Virginia been to see me?"

"Oh, she is coming soon! She would have been here several days ago, but hesitated, because several unmarried gentlemen were among your guests; and she thought it might be supposed by some she was husband hunting."

"I should be sorry if any one supposed that was my object!" said Miss Arum.

"And it would be a false supposition if applied to me!" said Miss Crudle.

"I'm ready, colonel," said Walter, coming in with a gun slung on his back.

"Very well," said the colonel, rising. "But," he continued in a low voice to Griselda, "are you not annoyed by dead rats? At my house the stench is insufferable. It seems

to me I have smelt something of the kind since I have been here. I can't imagine what could have killed them at so many different places, and at the same time."

"I do think I can perceive it now," said Griselda

"I do, very distinctly," said Walter. "Has any poison been thrown about?"

"No! certainly none that I know of," said his aunt.

"It grows stronger and stronger," said the colonel "Come, Walter; we will leave the ladies to smell it out."

And when the gentlemen departed, the ladies loudly manifested their horror of the disagreeable odor, which was really painfully disagreeable. But they vainly sought the cause of it.

"I believe," said the colonel, leading the way through the orchard, "your dead rat must be a larger one than mine I can smell it yet. We must get terriers, and not poison them. Walter!" he continued, placing his hand on the young man's shoulder, "what do you suppose I have been thinking about all day?"

"The first speech you will deliver in the U S Senate"

"No—though I think I shall make one there—a good, honest, American speech."

"Then I cannot conjecture what it is, unless it be how to pay the $10,000 you owe Roland, the disappointed candidate"

"That is pretty close shooting You came near the mark there Guess again."

"Perhaps you have been thinking that when you arrive in Washington, you may prevail on the President to appoint me secretary of legation at London."

"Eh? No, I didn't think of that; but I should have done it I will do it, Walter! Your ideas have been caught up and spread all over the State. The President must give you the appointment, if he wishes to gratify me You have my word that the appointment shall be conferred on you, if my influence will achieve You know my word is never lightly uttered, and my promises never forgotten I may fall out with you, and even hate you, if such a thing were possible—or you might hate me, which would be a more reasonable thing—still, I would urge the justice of your claims with none the less zeal and pertinacity."

"I am sure of it, sir. And truly such an office would be extremely gratifying to me You know I am poor, sir, and

young; and I might derive benefit from such an appointment, before I marry and become permanently settled."

"True.—Look out! I missed him!" said the colonel, seeing the cock he firod at enter an impenetrable grove of cedars. "Marriage, in your present condition, is out of the question, unless you could make up your mind to take one of the Arums or Crudles."

"Ha, ha, ha! I shall desire something more than the prospect of a share of an estate on the death of my wife's father."

"I didn't suppose they would suit you. You deserve a better fate."

"Be that as it may, I hope a better fate is in reserve for me."

"I hope so—I hope so—and I shall always hope so, even if we should become enemies. And even in that event, as I said before, I am resolved to get you the appointment."

"Enemies! Why do you repeat that word, colonel? Such a contingency is not at all supposable. We have never differed about any thing in our lives."

"I know it—and hence I fear, if we should differ hereafter the rupture will be a violent and irremediable one."

"Colonel, such a case is not probable. We can never fall out, I am quite sure."

"We'll see. I'll try you. But I tremble almost; for I love you, Walter. I have a daughter, you know."

"Yes, I know it."

"You dog, you, I am sure you do! She is a dutiful girl, a handsome girl, a spirited girl, a——"

"Colonel, you needn't repeat the catalogue of her good qualities to me. I know them as well as you do—perhaps better. If——."

"No ifs. It's no such thing. You are mistaken. Answer me, briefly: Have I not always encouraged the intimate friendship which subsisted between you and Virginia?"

"Yes, sir."

"True. But did I ever say you should have my consent to marry her? Turn your face away like I do, and answer me."

"No, colonel, I must admit that."

"True. But has there not been reason to suppose you looked forward to such a consummation, and that you desired it?"

"I cannot deny it."

"Now we come to the point! Then, if I should withhold my consent, would you not fall out with me—despise me—become my enemy?"

"No! No, sir, no! You would be only exercising a right which every parent should possess. So far from being offended, sir, I should attribute your conduct to a laudable desire to secure the happiness of your child. I am without fortune: your estate is, I know, encumbered with debt, and your motive would be to avert the evils of an incompetency—to——"

"You are a noble boy, Walter!" said the colonel, embracing him. "Faugh! I still smell that infernal rat! Then we *won't* fall out. You understand my condition thoroughly. But—but—suppose I were to promote a match with one of larger possessions?"

"I have already said I shall seek something besides fortune when I——"

"Oh, I don't mean *you*—but Virginia."

"Virginia?"

"Yes, Virginia."

"Virginia marry a rich man?"

"Yes! Why the deuce are you so much astonished at it?"

"Oh, if *she* were so disposed——"

"Of course it could never take place without her consent. But if she were to consent to such a thing, in obedience to my request, would you have a rupture with me?"

"No, sir! If she consented to it, I should have no reproaches to utter!" replied Walter, sadly.

"She would have to consent to it before it could take place. You don't suppose me capable of *compelling* my daughter to wed any one repugnant to her?"

"No, sir; I do not suppose any thing of the sort. And I admit a father, and an only surviving parent, should have the power of preventing a marriage which is displeasing to him."

"Why, we understand one another perfectly! Remember I have no right to force Virginia to marry against her will,—and she has no right to wed without my consent. That is reasonable, and I shall agree to it. If she opposes my will, I shall have the advantage of her."

"How so, sir?"

"Why, she may die an old maid—and I have no disposition to marry again."

"Very true. But in the mean time, I hope I shall not be forbidden her company?"

"No. That would be mean and tyrannical. Hang me if I haven't brought you to my house, without knowing where I was going—and yonder is Dash setting a bird a mile off! No matter, Walter; since we have agreed not to disagree. But I haven't told you who it is I have my eye upon——"

"You are looking at the dog, sir!"

"You are a sly, sarcastic rogue! I suspect that had a double meaning. But he is with Virginia now."

"Who?"

"Roland."

"Roland! Oh, very well, sir. He is rich. He is fond of the society of ladies. I have not a word to say, sir, why he should not be the man. I will not say a word to injure him, sir. Let him propose. Let him do his best. You have said you will not *constrain* her——"

"Yes, I have said it—and that's enough. You shall not be turned out of doors; don't apprehend any thing of the kind. But don't quarrel with him. Calm your excitement——"

"Am I excited?"

"Do flashes of lightning indicate a cloud? But you can't see your own face. Come in. There's the cursed rat again! I'll find it, or tear the house down. Oh, I'll lead you into the parlor, since you are so pale."

And when they entered, if the colonel had cast his eyes toward his daughter's face, he might have seen more flashes. Doubtless, Roland had been urging his suit; but from the manner in which Virginia greeted Walter, that young gentleman felt assured his rival was not likely to succeed immediately.

"Don't you smell a rat?" asked the colonel, sitting beside Roland.

"I certainly do perceive a disagreeable odor, colonel, since you mention it; but I have not observed it before."

"That proves you have been agreeably entertained; for I smelt it before I went forth with my gun, and before your arrival. Here, Tom! Dick! Harry! Susan! Nell! Come and

remove the bushes from the fireplace. Look under the sofas and the sideboard. Tear up the floor. The cursed rat is in this room, or near it, I'm sure, and it must be found, or I'll burn down the house!" The servants came in, and looked every where in vain.

"Massa," said Tom, an emancipated slave from the Old Dominion, "it's nigh you. I can scent like a dog, and I track it to you."

"Track it to *me*, you infernal fool! What do you mean?"

"I'll 'splain, massa. You killed one woodcock last week——"

"Yes, last week; and I have not killed any since."

"That's de truf, massa! Did massa eat 'im?"

"No! Cook, why didn't you serve up the cock I killed last week?"

"I nebber seed it."

"Never——"

"Stop, stop, massa!" said Tom. "I'll 'splain. My nose is right. Don't be 'fended, massa," he continued, inserting his hand into one of the pockets of the colonel's hunting coat, and pulling out the woodcock, in an advanced state of decomposition. The truth was, the colonel had never taken the bird from his pocket; and although he recollected the fine shot which brought him down, he had forgotten every thing else. He rushed out of the room and threw off his coat, while Virginia and her rival suitors were convulsed with laughter.

When the colonel returned, in another dress, he perceived his daughter at the piano, and a suitor on each side of her. Virginia, like most of her sex, seemed amused at the assiduities of the rivals, but could not restrain her merriment when, ever and anon, the thought of the rat recurred to her.

"Sing something sad and pensive, Virginia," said her father.

"Yes, father," said the laughing girl; "and I will thank you for deciding what it shall be. These gentlemen have been naming the songs they are partial to, and they are so dissimilar, I know not which to oblige, fearing to offend the other. But if I can please you, I care not who may be displeased."

"That's a good daughter. Sing me, then, a Scotch song."

She did so, and was assisted by Walter.

Sailor. When lightning parts the thunder-cloud
That blackens all the sea,
And tempests sough through sail and shroud,
Even then I think on thee, Mary.

Shepherdess. I wrap me in that keepsake plaid,
And lie doun 'mang the snaw;
While frozen are the tears I shed
For him that's far awa', Willy!

Sailor. We sail past mony a bonny isle,
Wi' maids the shores are thrang;
Before my ee there's but ae smile,
Within my ear ae sang, Mary.

Shepherdess. In kirk, on every Sabbath day,
For ane on the great deep
Unto my God I humbly pray—
And as I pray, I weep, Willy.

Sailor. The sands are bright wi' golden shells,
The groves wi' blossoms fair;
And I think upon the heather-bells
That deck thy glossy hair, Mary.

Shepherdess. I read thy letters sent from far,
And aft I kiss thy name,
And ask my Maker, frae the war
If ever thou'lt come hame, Willy.

Sailor. What though your father's hut be lown
Aneath the green-hill side?
The ship that Willy sails in, blown
Like chaff by wind and tide, Mary?

Shepherdess. Oh! weel I ken the raging sea,
And a' the steadfast land,
Are held, wi' specks like thee and me,
In the hollow of his hand, Willy.

Sailor. He sees thee sitting on the brae,
Me hanging on the mast;
And o'er us baith, in dew or spray,
His saving shield is cast, Mary.

"Good! good! Walter," said the colonel. "Where did you learn to sing so well? It is a good song. You should learn to sing, Roland. It is a fine accomplishment. Thank you, Virginia; I do not regret the expense of your music,

although it does sometimes start a tear. Excuse me, my friends; I have an irresistible desire for a lonely, contemplative walk."

"Walter," said Virginia, when the colonel had departed, "my father will never again refer to your adventure in the city, for fear you will retaliate with the tale of the rat."

"I will retaliate with that tale if he does. I will detail it and retail it, as often as he refers to my adventure."

"May I have the slightest hint of the nature of the adventure?" asked Roland.

"Oh, yes," said Virginia; "he can't retaliate on me. You will not be offended?" she continued, addressing Walter, archly.

"No, not at all—if you tell every thing; what was found in the barrel, and all."

"No, *you* must tell it."

"Another time will answer," said Roland, with an air of indifference; and shortly after he took his leave—having first, in a whisper, besought Virginia not to betray any of *his* secrets.

He was met by the colonel on the lawn, and a long conversation ensued between them, and in view of the parlor window, in the recess of which stood Virginia and Walter.

"What was it he whispered, if I may be so bold?" said Walter

"You saw——"

"I did."

"What, a whisper? What did it look like? But, really, I have a great secret—one that will make you exceedingly pale when you hear it. Your hair will stand up, and perhaps turn gray. Do you think you can bear to hear it now? Or would it not be better to prepare you for the disclosure, by a little tantalizing suspense?"

"I will forestall you. I know it already; and, perhaps, more of it than you do. He is a suitor for your hand, and your father has sanctioned his pretensions."

"And so my father has made a speech to you, too? Well, the agony of the first interview with my proposed husband is over."

"Virginia! tell me—won't you tell me what passed between you before I came in? What did he propose? What did you say?"

"He proposed to marry me."

"And what did you say?"

"I was silent."

"Silent? Heavens, Virginia! did you not know how he would interpret your silence? He will consider you irrevocably bound to him! Why did you not speak?"

"I could not trust myself. I did not like to give vent to an outburst of anger, and it would have been highly improper to laugh outright—both of which inclinations seized me alternately."

"But what did you think of him?"

"I thought he was a fool! To suppose that a desire to possess his wealth could induce, or the fear of his vengeance constrain *me* to lend a favorable ear to his audacious——"

"I'll——" began Walter, starting forward.

"No you won't! He had a right to say what he did; and unless you promise not to have a quarrel with him, I may accept him."

"I promise," said Walter, resuming his position at her side. "Now you will not accept him?"

"No, I will not."

"But if your father desires it?"

"He will not desire it, if it be repugnant to my inclination—which it is, and ever will be. I said I made no reply to Roland. I did not; your arrival interrupted the interview. But a reply was burning on my tongue! I intended to say—but it would have displeased my father, and I am glad I did not utter it."

"What was it? Pray, let me hear what it was you intended to say."

"That I would rather wed Bill Dixie, or the greenest frog he ever caught, than you!"

"*Me!*"

"Ralph Roland!"

[redacted]

"Brave, noble, lovely Virginia!"

"Oh, I know that; you've told me so twenty times, and —I almost believe you think and feel what you say."

"I do; and I say the truth! But we—I mean I—am poor——"

"We are both very young, and can wait——"

"And you will truly and faithfully——"

"What?"

"Wait for me? Yes—I see it in your eye! I will achieve fortune! I will return rich!"

"Then you will leave me?"

"I must—for a time. But you will be beset by this man—middle-aged as he is; importuned by your father, implored by your friends, to yield—to forget—to abandon me!"

"My father will not attempt any constraint."

"No; he promised me that, and he will not disregard his word."

"And so you extorted that promise from him? He declared the same to me, before I could be prevailed upon to permit Roland to approach me with his ridiculous pretensions. I have agreed to see him whenever he comes, and to give him an opportunity to win me, if he has the ability."

"You have agreed to that?"

"Certainly; but you know he has not the ability. I shall amuse myself at his expense."

"Virginia, beware of the arts of that man!"

"Art has nothing to do with it; it is nature. One Winkle to a thousand Rolands!"

"My glorious Virginia! I——"

"Stop! Be careful! You forget that your gestures may be observed, and then you may be banished before the time fixed upon by yourself for your departure. One, two, three, four—will it be four?"

"Four what?"

"Years. Yes, I think so. But I will be true. Be you the same!"

"If I should not be, may——"

"No solemn pledges—no oaths. If you meet with one you like better than Virginia, take her. I will wait and see. Here comes my father."

Walter was loved almost as much by the colonel as by his daughter; and hence, although Roland had just intimated a wish that his youthful rival, destitute as he was, might not be so freely entertained as formerly, yet was Walter, in accordance with the colonel's custom, pressed to remain at the mansion the remainder of the day. And the invitation was so earnestly given, and so sweetly seconded by the glances of Virginia, that the young man felt incapable of tearing himself away.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WALTER TAKES LEAVE OF HIS AUNT—THE WIDOW WINKLE'S HOUSE SOLD OVER HER HEAD.

It was winter. The Arums and Crudles had extorted sufficient money from their parents, to defray the expenses of a two months' residence in New York. They stopped a whole day at a fashionable hotel, that their names might be announced in the newspapers; afterwards they moved to a fashionable up-town boarding-house. They had no relations in the city but some poor cousins—and the Arums and Crudles likewise, were cousins—whom they had long since ceased to associate with on familiar terms. The father of their New York cousins, was a small tradesman; he kept a shop, and sold ladies' shoes. Mr. Poke was poor; and of course he did not even have the custom of his wealthy relations from Babbleton, much less their social visits.

Congress having assembled, Walter resolved to try his fortune at Washington, whither Mr. Plastic had written in his behalf to the President; and there seemed some prospect of success; at least such was the purport of one of the replies signed by the President's private secretary.

Lowe accompanied Walter as far as Philadelphia, hoping to learn something definite in relation to the abode of Lucy, whose absence had become insupportable. Walter, however, was pledged to secrecy, so long as Lowe's secret remained unexplained. Such was Lucy's peremptory command.

The young men rung at the door of the Winkle mansion, and were instantly admitted by Rose. Being conducted into the parlor, they were immediately joined by Miss Wilsome, dressed in her superb style, and in readiness for the enjoyment of the gayest society.

"Mr. Lowe!" cried she. "My dear friend, I am glad to see you. Why have you neglected me? Who is that?" she asked, pointing to Walter, who sat at the other end of the sofa.

"It is Walter, your nephew," said Lowe, wondering why Walter did not answer the question himself.

"Walter? Oh, that disobedient boy! I don't know him.

You may take your leave, sir," said she, addressing her nephew, "and remain away until I send for you."

"I called merely to pay my duty, aunt, and take my leave," said Walter, rising. "I am, perhaps, on the very eve of leaving the United States, never to return."

"Sit down, sir!" she cried, in a startling voice. "Explain the meaning of your words. Why should you leave your country?"

"My mother is poor——"

"Nonsense! It is not so—it cannot be so, with the fortune my brother inherited, and the handsome dowry possessed by herself. It is impossible. But what could you do abroad?"

"If I go, it will be in the capacity of a diplomatic agent. I hope to obtain an appointment of that character from the President, and am now on my way to Washington with letters of introduction and recommendation."

"Burn them, and go home! That is my advice. A Winkle to stoop to that! An office-seeker! Do you not know it is derogatory to your character to hold office under the present executive, or under any of them, elected as he was? No, sir! Let the Irish and German grog-shop keepers have the offices! If they can make Presidents, they can fill the subordinate posts. Will you burn your papers?"

"I cannot, aunt; I am pledged——"

"Very well. Farewell, then. I have heard it said you should have been bred to some useful pursuit—but I never supposed you could take up such a low trade as the politician's. You'll die a beggar. Mind that. Your uncle will have an heir to cut you off from the reversion—provided Gusset finds out her husband has but a life estate in the lands. She can manage it—the Lord knows how—I don't. But she would produce one. Your father squandered money and lost reputation in office. But he was elected by the people, not appointed by any of your Irish Presidents. If he died poor, which I cannot believe, you may be sure he lost his fortune in politics."

"Aunt," said Walter, "I have nothing to lose."

"Nothing to lose! You are a Winkle! You have a name, and I suppose a character to lose. Go along about your foolish business! You may stay, however, till after dinner.

if you will take dummy and play against Mr. Lowe and myself."

"I should be delighted,' said Lowe, rising, "to make one; but I have an engagement an hour hence. which I am bound in honor not to neglect. I came, Miss Wilsome, once more to entreat you to tell me, if you can, where I may find your niece——"

"My niece! Gone into politics, I suppose, or some other disreputable——"

"Disreputable, madam!"

"I mean taken up some disgraceful employment or other. Such as teaching music, or laboring in some way to make a living, when I am absolutely certain her father possessed an ample fortune. Oh, you needn't look so disconsolate, if you really love the girl. She is handsome enough, and I will answer with my life for her propriety of conduct."

"You know not where she is?"

"I do not."

"Then she is not in the city?"

"No, I think not. Nor in New York, either, although she has an aunt there, too."

"She has?"

"Yes, she has. But she could never live with her."

"Her name?"

"Flora Blount—a fat creature, who lives on novels, while a keen-eyed Scotch woman, her companion, a Miss McCrabbed, steals her money."

"Lucy is there—I am sure!" said Lowe.

"And I am sure she is not. Miss McCrabbed would not permit it. She would make the house—and a fine old mansion it is—too uncomfortable—unless, indeed, Lucy had the art to quote some of Flora's favorite passages from the English novels, and make them apply to her case. But then, I don't think a Winkle would stoop to contend with a Scotch woman."

"She is there," continued Lowe.

"If she is, she's safe. Therefore you can play with perfect composure."

Lowe thought differently, although he did not say so. He departed to keep his appointment, promising, however, to return if he remained in the city.

"Aunt," said Walter, rising, "I must go, too. Farewell."

"I won't take your hand, if you are going to dabble in

filthy politics. After the expulsion of foreigners from office, gentlemen, and Americans may succeed to the government."

"Can you tell me any thing about Pollen, aunt? I have sought him in vain."

"Yes; he left the city last week. He is in New York, and I hope he will fall in with your Aunt Blount."

"She would have to feed on something more substantial than fashionable British novels to entertain him. But I am sorry his magazine was a failure. The first number—and it was the last—was really magnificent."

"Of course it was. He has more genius than all the tribe of his persecutors combined. But it was his own fault he failed. He sent me the magazine, and I was pleased with it, and sent for him. He came; and what do you suppose he said to me?"

"I cannot guess. He is different from other men."

"He's a fool! He told me that *Gusset*, the stitching milliner, had loaned him the money to begin his publication! And he said he had no doubt she would loan him as much more as he wanted."

"Then he was mistaken."

"Certainly he was! What better could he expect from her, a low-bred milliner! She patronizing a man of genius!"

"She showed me his letter, a grateful acknowledgment——"

"Grateful, indeed! I don't believe it. He is incapable of gratitude. All geniuses are forgetful of favors."

"However, his thanks expressed in that way did not please her. She was disappointed with the magazine——"

"How could she appreciate its merits? She knows nothing of literature."

"But she could have read her own praises in poetry or prose, and there was nothing of the sort in it."

"Ha, ha, ha! Gusset wanting to be flattered in print! Fool as he is, Pollen has too much sense to be guilty of any such absurdity."

"She therefore returned the magazine, and refused to loan him more money. She went further, and sent him a bill and a dun for what she had already advanced."

"The milliner! A bill! A dun! Just like her! She knows how to receipt a bill for a bonnet. It is part of her trade. The idea of sending a bill to a poet! Oh, Walter,

you see what it is to have to do with vulgar people! But I wish Pollen had shown me her letter. He was a fool for not doing so. I might have made his fortune. But I was incensed. Printers, papermakers, and others, came to me to know if he was responsible, and all that. I had them turned out of doors without a word of reply. If I had known Gusset's conduct, I should have paid their bills; and I might have caused the magazine to be read and patronized in good circles. But the fool was inflexible. The enterprise failed, inevitably. Then a bill came to me for the price of the number I had received."

"Is it possible? I did not think Pollen——"

"Oh, necessity knows no law, they say, and the messenger said Pollen was in distress, and wanted the means of going to New York, where he had a prospect of obtaining employment as a sub-editor, or something of that sort."

"Then I am sure you paid the bill."

"I threw the bill in the fire, and sent him a check for fifty dollars, with a message to leave the city as quick as possible."

"That was noble in you, aunt."

"It was different from Gusset's conduct. And now, since you are taking your final leave of me, for I shall have nothing more to do with you when lost in politics, here is a check, that you may not starve in the streets. No thanks—not a word, or I will throw it in the fire! There! Away with you, now!" Walter thrust the check in his pocket without reading it, and hastened away.

Lowe did not return to the Winkle mansion, and it is doubtful whether Miss Wilsome was able to make up the partners for her game that day. As for Lucy's lover, impressed with the belief that the one he sought, and from whom he could not endure a longer separation, was sojourning with her novel-reading aunt, he lost no time in taking passage for New York.

At Babbleton, there was an occurrence, a few days after the departure of Walter, which must be noted in this true and faithful history. Roland, as if it might console him for his defeat and disappointment, had foreclosed the mortgage on Mrs. Winkle's property, and advertised it for sale. At every corner of the village, at the inns, on the fences, and on

the trees, were printed handbills, announcing the sale of the widow's house and ground.

And the wretch still had the impudence to visit the widow, and attempt to justify his conduct under the plea of necessity. He said he owed many debts, and could collect nothing except by process of law. Yet he never omitted to hint, that if Lucy would favor his addresses, the claim should be cancelled and he would either sell a portion of his own property to realize the sum he stood in need of, or else bring suit against other persons indebted to him.

Mrs. Winkle, most unaccountably to Roland, far from deprecating his proceedings against her, besought him to spare the others. This incensed him very much, and it was with great difficulty he could suppress the malignity which consumed him, although it was his policy to avoid an irreconcilable rupture, as he still hoped that circumstances might yet throw Lucy within his grasp. Therefore at every interview with the widow, he sighed and groaned, and uttered protestations of his constant affection for her daughter, and lamentations that stern necessity compelled him to foreclose the mortgage.

Virginia amused herself at the expense of her suitor, and would not deign to make a definite reply to his urgent entreaties to be informed of his future fate. But he knew the spirit of the girl, and could build no expectation of success upon any of his own allurements, or stratagems, such as he had employed for the destruction of Lucy and others. His only hope rested upon the influence of her father; but upon that, as we have seen, he was likely to rely in vain. In seeking to consummate an advantageous alliance, Col. Oakdale was incapable of meditating a sacrifice of his daughter's happiness; of knowingly entertaining for a moment the pretensions of a man wholly unworthy of being connected with his family. Honorable himself, he was likely to be the last to attribute disreputable motives to another.

On the day of sale there was a large crowd assembled in front of the widow's premises.

Roland stood at the sheriff's elbow, with a recently-formed intention to buy the property himself, and, as his tenants, he dreaded lest Lucy and her mother would evince a more tractable spirit than they had hitherto manifested.

Bawsey, the Scotch lawyer, was there to bid in the same

of Napoleon Winkle. This had been arranged by Griselda, who was, as she congratulated herself, to fall heir to all the real estate of her husband, when his mortal career should be ended. The lawyer was not authorized, however, to bid more than two or three thousand dollars, which Griselda thought would be quite as much as the property would bring at auction. She felt confident that Bawson's bid would be the highest, and that henceforth her old friend and protector, now fallen into the disgrace of poverty, would be her tenant.

David Deal, the Quaker landlord, was there, prepared to purchase the property at half its value, if no one bid higher. Supposing the messuage would be sacrificed, and that he would be the purchaser, he had taken the precaution to prevent any odium that might be attached to such a purchase, by assuring his friends, if he should buy the property at a low figure, it would be because no one else would bid higher; and as a man could not bid against himself, and as the purchaser must always be the highest bidder, he ought never to be blamed for receiving double the value of his money, at a public sale.

John Dowly stood with folded arms in the crowd assembled in front of the premises. He was a silent spectator, looking on with a sorrowful countenance. Many wondered what business *he* could have at the sale; and some uttered jests at his expense, and within his hearing.

The widow sat in her parlor with a placid countenance. The window was hoisted, so that she could answer any inquiries respecting the conveniences of the establishment.

The sheriff read aloud his authority to sell, and afterwards a particular description of the property. Then the house was put up for sale. Davy Deal bid $500.

"Five hundred dollars!" cried the auctioneer; "just one eighth of the amount of the mortgage, and not one sixteenth of the value of the property!"

"Thee knows I can't buy it if any one else bids more," said Davy.

"One thousand dollars," said Mr. Arum.

"Two thousand," said Mr. Crudle.

"I'm done," said David; and he walked away.

"Twenty-two hundred," said Bawson.

"Twenty-five hundred," said Roland.

"Twenty-five hundred—twenty-five hundred—two thousand five hundred—going—going——"

"Stop! stop! you —— infernal scoundrel! If you sell it before I get there, I'll blow your brains out!" This was uttered by Sergeant Blore, who approached as fast as possible, thumping the frozen ground at every step with his wooden leg. "Here," he continued, stumbling up to the sheriff and placing in his hand an old handkerchief, in which were wrapped gold and silver coins, and rolls of city six per cent. bonds—"Count them, I say; I bid that much."

"You had better not interfere in this matter," said Roland.

"Not interfere? Isn't it a public sale? I bid that—I don't know exactly how much—but if he takes another bid before he cries mine, I'll pistol him, if I hang for it the next hour. Not interfere! Mr Roland!——"

"Well, sir—what do you want with me?"

"You are a rascal, sir! That's all!"

"What? What?"

"You heard me, and so did all the people. Ask them. You know where I can be found. I shall expect to hear from you. Sheriff, you can't count it on your arm. Put it down on the ground. I'll see in a minute how much my bid is." The old sergeant sat down, and spread open the handkerchief between his legs. Having placed a small pistol on one corner of the handkerchief, he proceeded to count the money. Before this was accomplished, and just when Roland had satisfied himself the sum was less than the amount of his own bid, old Dibble, Mrs. Winkle's gardener, came running from the bank with a hatfull of money—silver and gold, and small bills mingled—which he poured out beside the sergeant's treasure.

"There," said he, "count that, too. Bid it all, sergeant. I'll stand by you. He *is* a rascal. Never fear."

"Fear? I'm not afraid of the devil!"

"Hit's a scandal hand a himposition for one's usband to squander hany thing hin that manner," said Mrs Edwards from an upper window of Lowe's house. "Let me get hat im," she continued, slamming down the window, and disappearing from view.

"Take care of it, Dibble!" said the sergeant. "Don't let her touch a penny. Swear it's all your own. I'm off." And the poor old sergeant scampered away with a sort of hop-step and a jump motion, and was soon out of view, followed by Mrs Edwards, whom he distanced, however.

"Twenty-six hundred dollars!" cried the sheriff, when Dibble completed the count.

"Twenty-seven hundred," said Roland, whose face was still burning with the rage excited by the sergeant.

"Four thousand," said the widow, from the window.

"That's the amount of the mortgage," said the sheriff; "and if you have the money, and enough besides to pay the costs, &c., I shan't take another bid."

"She has no money," said Roland, in the sheriff's ear; "if so, she could have paid the debt. Don't take her bid."

"I must. She may have the money. I rather think she has," he continued, espying a roll of bank notes partially exposed in the widow's hand.

"You are mistaken. Else why did she permit the property to be advertised?"

"She may have had reasons for it. I've known such things to take place. She may have wished to see who were her friends, or whether you really had the cruelty to sell her house over her head. It will tell against you at the next election, if you're a candidate."

"Proceed," said Roland. "Discharge your duty. I suppose you can sympathize with any one after your commissions are secured."

"It's a free country, sir, and I can do as I please about this matter. It's the first time I ever cried off the home of the widow of a member of Congress, and I hope it may be the last. But her bid shall have it, and if she has not got the money, I'll join with old Dibble and the sergeant and make it up. "Going—going—Gone. Too late, sir," he said, when Roland bid five hundred more.

Mrs. Winkle was attracted by a stamping in the hall.

"Who is it, Biddy?" she asked, when the girl entered.

"Dill Bizzle."

"Show him in. What's the matter, Bill?" she continued, seeing the frog-catcher panting with excitement.

"I—I beg pardon, mam—but I hearn they was going to sell you out of house and home, and so I went to the city early, and seed Miss Wilsome, mam."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, mam, and she'll be here in a minute. She told me to run on before and stop the sale till she come. Yonder she is," continued Bill, looking out of the window.

"Stop the sale!" said Wilsome, in a harsher voice than usual. "Where's the monster? Oh, there you are, you villain," she continued, approaching Roland, who, however, retreated with all possible expedition.

"The sale is over, madam," said the sheriff

"Over! Monstrous! Why didn't you wait till I arrived?"

"I did not know you were coming."

"Not know I was coming? Ridiculous! Who bought it?"

"The widow herself, madam—and she has placed the money in my hands. It is in large bills, and is perfectly correct

"Then that idiot, Bill Dizzle has led me a wild-goose chase. I broke up a whist party, and signed half a dozen checks for nothing."

"Come in, sister," said the widow.

"No! I wont! I've been made a fool of. True, the idiot said you didn't know he came to me. That's the reason I determined to come. Now I find there is nothing for me to do—and I had made up a party of four, and dummy was all needed. It was a wild-goose chase! I'll go back in the next train. I hear the whistle," and turning away abruptly, she strode towards the depot. And it was observed that when she approached the crowd of passengers waiting on the platform Roland, who had been standing among them, pulled down his hat and strode off in another direction.

Before the crowd dispersed, three hearty cheers were given for the widow, and as many groans for Roland.

John Dowly was invited in, and constrained to stay to dinner. The sergeant made his appearance in the kitchen having scaled the wall in the rear, being assisted by the Dowlys, father and son.

The widow quite as merry as ever she was in the days of prosperity thanked her kind friends with tears in her eyes, but with a brave heart and smiling lips. Even poor Bill Dizzle almost annihilated under the frown of Wilsome was consoled by the grateful widow, who appreciated his generous motive.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MISS FLORA BLOUNT'S MANSION IN NEW YORK—LUCY UNMASKS THE SCOTCH EDITH—THE MILNORS—THE BLUE CARRIAGE.

THE mansion in New York, occupied and owned by Miss Flora Blount, was situated near the Battery, and was, half a century before, considered one of the most stately and desirable residences in the city. It had been the scene of many gorgeous displays during the Revolution, and when Washington was shivering among the snows of the Highlands. Its halls and spacious chambers had resounded with British revelry, while the stifled groans of the suffering Americans, exposed to the inclemencies of a stormy winter, rose in effectual appeals to the great Arbiter of human affairs; and it was decreed that Sir Harry Clinton should ultimately relinquish not only his comfortable quarters, but the city itself, and the entire country, to their proper owners. All this, however, had transpired years before the characters in this history were born.

But the mansion itself had not changed. Since the death of Maj Blount, and the school days of Edith and Flora, the house had not been repaired. There had been no paint bestowed on the doors, the window shutters, or the iron railing in front. There it stood just as it had done in the old colonial days, a specimen of British architecture, and of the olden-time ideas of comfort. Dust had accumulated on the sills, above the windows, and in every place it was possible to find a lodgment; and the spaces between the windows and the cornices were festooned with cobwebs, just as many of the old houses are in Parke street, London, and which are often occupied by the nobility.

Within, however, the scene was different from the interior of the Grosvenor square residences. The last occupant of the Blount mansion seemed to have made no effort, or did not possess the pecuniary ability, to vie in magnificence of furniture, with the proud dames of the fashionable west end of London. Within and without the scene was the same. Neglect or dilapidation was observable wherever the eye might

rest. The old lion-headed knocker remained on the door, a great glass globule, containing the oil-fed lamp was still suspended in the hall; in the parlors were retained the old high-backed chairs, the carving worn smooth, and the wood turned black with age, as was the case with all the furniture, and the carpets, once luxurious and beautiful, were now threadbare, with their figures nearly obliterated. There were, however, mirrors, and fine paintings, which had not deteriorated, except in the frames, from which the gilt had long since disappeared.

The old fire-places remained as they were originally built, and no gas pipes had invaded the premises. A pump was in the rear yard, from whose spout Andre, and Agnew, and Howe had quaffed the flowing water. The spirit of innovation had passed harmlessly over the old Blount homestead, and for some unexplained purpose, the last of the name was permitted to escape the predominant mania of the times.

Like many other ladies, Miss Flora Blount, having survived the last decade of half a century, had neither talent nor taste for business. But she had enjoyments, and so long as she might not be molested in the indulgence of them, she was quite willing the burden of the management of her pecuniary affairs should be borne by another. And in her case, the one which had been supplied by chance, was eminently adapted to the purpose, both of relieving her principal of the cares of ordering the ways and means in an economical establishment and of providing for herself. This individual was the one already introduced to the reader—Miss Edith McCrabbed. She had been recommended by one of Flora's literary acquaintances, when traveling abroad, and had been met with in Edinburgh. She was the niece of an old lady of decayed fortune, who was under the necessity of letting lodgings in a house she held on a long lease in Duke street, and with whom had sojourned occasionally Sir Walter Scott, James Hogg, Jno. Wilson, and other worthies famous in the world of letters. Miss Edith although she had moved in the capacity of a sort of upper servant to her aunt had nevertheless enjoyed the acquaintance of the lions, and become familiar with many anecdotes relating to their professional persons, etc. And she had read their works, particularly those of Scott and of the other writers of fiction, and could readily sympathize with Flora in her appre-

ation of romantic characters. She was a treasure, such as Flora had often sighed to possess; and Edith soon perceived that her lot had been cast with one exactly suited to her taste and purposes.

By an almost imperceptible process, Edith obtained the exclusive direction of the affairs of her confiding employer, and finally managed them in such a manner that the least possible amount of the miseries of life should be endured by either of them, while the greatest possible sum of profit should be realized for herself. One after another the servants had been dismissed, and Scotch substitutes were temporarily introduced to perform the indispensable duties periodically occurring. Last of all the cook had been dispensed with, and a contract entered into with a Scotch restaurateur to furnish the table. By degrees the guests entertained at Flora's board became diminished in number, she could not tell how or why; and finally they ceased altogether to enjoy her hospitality, such at least as involved any expense. Upon the first symptoms of dissatisfaction at such a result of the system of economy introduced by her friend—she never called her otherwise—Edith exhibited a statement of the income and expenditures of the establishment, and thus silenced all objections.

And now the only guests that the circumstances of Flora permitted her to entertain at the social hearth, or otherwise, were the few surviving old maids or gay matrons who had been her contemporaries in girlhood, and still remembered the importance and high standing of the Blount family in former days. These ancient friends, themselves mostly aristocratic in their antecedents, and generally wealthy, from the increase in value of old estates remaining in their families, which appreciation their husbands, sons, or brothers, had the acuteness to perceive, and to avail themselves of, still called at the Blount mansion, and enjoyed the rhapsodies of Flora over the last British novel. They came in their own coaches, while the economical administration of Edith required their visits to be returned in omnibuses.

The table was set in the breakfast room, before a diminutive fire feebly blazing on the hearth; at one corner of which was seated Lucy Winkle, in an old leather-covered arm-chair; at the other Edith McCrabbed, enveloped in a thick shawl, occupied a low stool.

"I am shivering with the cold," said Lucy, putting down

the paper she had been reading, and placing on the fire a small piece of wood. She then endeavored to assist its ignition by means of the bellows.

"Pardon me, Miss Lucy," said Miss McCrabbe [illegible] must warn you against any useless extravagance, if you [illegible] not see your aunt brought to absolute destitution. If that [illegible] should burn as freely as you desire, it would be [illegible] fore your aunt comes down. She will be late this [illegible] You know it was midnight when she left the opera [illegible] she got to bed I read the piece to her in the English [illegible] tion, which was not finished until three o'clock [illegible] —for the affecting scenes had to be repeated three [illegible] times——"

"That was not contrary to her habit, Miss McCrabbe," said Lucy, puffing away with the bellows—"but I [illegible] why we should not be comfortable. I am sure my [illegible] be grieved to think we had been suffering. There [illegible] ing now."

"It would almost break her heart! Never, I beg [illegible] [illegible] such a thing in her presence. You [illegible] [illegible] and tender her sensibilities. It [illegible] [illegible] her susceptible feelings."

"[illegible] indeed. But still [illegible] seems to me that [illegible] [illegible] to suffer from cold [illegible] [illegible] The boy, M[illegible], when he comes [illegible] [illegible]"

"[illegible] I am willing to do any thing. I have [illegible] [illegible] of labor or drudgery I [illegible] [illegible] But I am afraid of putting [illegible] [illegible] into your aunt's purse. [illegible] [illegible] they charge two for sawing [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Why, does not my aunt own [illegible]

"Yes—that is the old store in Broadway—and it alone sup-

plies the means of subsistence. She has lived upon the rent of it these thirty years."

"What sum does it rent for, Miss McCrabbed?"

"It would be difficult to say," said Miss McCrabbed, petulantly. "The taxes increase every year, and must be paid out of the next quarter's rent, which does not fall due for a week yet. Then there are a hundred dollars for repairing the roof, and other items—over five hundred dollars in all."

"I am sorry to hear it. I am sure it will require a large portion of the quarter's rent to pay the taxes and repairs."

"You may be quite sure of that. But if it was all! Only glance your eye at the bundle of bills on the side table. The restaurateur's bill is another hundred, and the bookseller's as much more; and there are twenty smaller bills, and all must be paid on the first of the month. It is my duty to show these bills to your aunt; but she never shocks her nerves by undoing them and looking at the disgusting figures. And when they are paid, she won't even examine the receipts. I am astonished that a young lady of your delicacy," continued Miss McCrabbed, as Lucy approached the table and untied the papers, "can have the patience and moral courage, or rather the hardihood, to read the items; and particularly such items as some of them contain. I would not look at them, Miss Winkle. The cabinetmaker has put down so much for mending an old piano leg, and repairing a sofa bottom; and his charges are outrageous—but must be paid."

"But how much per quarter does my aunt receive for the store?" repeated Lucy, whose quick eye soon comprehended the rather startling sum total of the demands to be met at the end of the month, then on the eve of expiring.

"Oh, it was rented by your aunt herself, before I left Scotland, to the Messrs. Milnor & Co.; you can ask her. I have, it is true, collected the rent for many years, and paid all the bills."

"Then you know exactly the amount of her income and expenditures?"

"How curious you are! If some of your aunt's acquaintances were to hear you, they wouldn't hint any more that poor Edith was laying plans to fall heir to Miss Flora's fortune, such as it is."

"My object, Miss McCrabbed, is to learn if my sojourn here is a burden that ought not to be imposed on my aunt."

"I am sure of it, if any extravagance is indulged. You must not be offended at my plain speech, which means nothing. You may rely upon it, your kind aunt never knows what she can afford, or what she has to pay with, but from me. Be economical, as I am, and don't startle her by any allusions to her pecuniary affairs, and the expense of your living shall never enter her mind. You may rely upon me for that."

Lucy mused in silence, while pretending to resume the perusal of the paper, and Miss McCrabbed, turning away her face, employed herself in separating the sticks of wood in such a manner as to prevent them from being too quickly consumed.

Miss Flora Blount came down at length, holding a volume in her hand. There were traces of tears on her cheeks, evidences of the power of the gifted novelist.

Miss Flora's age has been already hinted at sufficiently near. But, being fat, and somewhat rotund in outline, she bore her years very lightly, and still preserved a fulness of cheek, and smoothness of skin, not often possessed by those twenty years her junior. And her hair was still of a glossy blackness, which was sufficiently indicative of the fact that her sensitive nerves had not been often assailed by the miserable shocks incident to age. Poor as her Scotch [illegible] represented her, it was nevertheless quite evident that apprehensions of future destitution and misery had not been permitted to prey too deeply upon her tender life. Inroads of that nature upon her spirits, might have caused an investigation, and the adoption of a new system of finance.

"My dear Lucy," said Flora, "why do you neglect your toast? Is not the coffee good?"

"Excellent, dear aunt, it is always good. But for some cause, and I am sure I cannot describe it, my appetite does not appear to be so voracious this morning as usual."

"You alarm me! Edith, what do you suppose it is? You can always tell what ails me, and find a remedy. I wish you [illegible] the hurts and wants of Lucy. She [illegible] I shall be very unhappy."

"[illegible] been allowing her mind to dwell upon pecuniary matters and [illegible] affairs of business," said Miss McCrabbed.

"[illegible] that my dear child [illegible] I had undertaken to manage my own business [illegible] I should have been in the grave long ago. I owe my life to Edith. Dr McGab has told me so a hundred times. And

he assures me I shall never go to the poor-house, so long as his countrywoman can be induced to stay with me. You must give me at least a ten years' notice, Edith, before you leave, so that I may put my house in order, for I shall not survive your loss. Don't shed tears, dear Edith, or I shall be unnerved. I am sure you won't desert me. But if Lucy would get you to think for her on the subject of her mother's affairs, I am certain you would be able to devise a plan by which my poor sister might live in comfort on the little estate she has remaining."

"I would do so with pleasure," said Miss McCrabbed, "if it were not that Miss Lucy has a brother. The men think our sex should not meddle with matters of business. They deem us incapable of such duties. But—bless me, how loud somebody rings! Excuse me—it must be the postman." And she arose and went to the street door.

"She was mistaken, aunt," said Lucy. "I was not dwelling upon my dear mother's affairs at all—but upon yours."

"Mine? Oh, leave that to Edith. She understands every thing, and her face is already spoiled by the cares of business."

"But I am afraid my living with you will add too much to your expenses."

"Not so! You will soon get accustomed to Edith's ways. She'll find the means of paying the bills. See what a number of them she has placed on the table for my inspection. The honest creature really supposes I may some time or other be disposed to examine them!"

"I have been examining some of them, aunt; and I wish you would permit me to go and settle them for you."

"Have you no aversion for such things, my dear Lucy?"

"Not the least. I have been accustomed to paying my mother's bills, when Walter was absent."

"If you could relieve poor Edith—for she has run herself down to a mere shadow—but then she would not consent to it. She don't mind trouble. If she had not dissuaded me from having Walter along with you, he might have attended to such things—but, really, she convinced me there was no chamber fit to lodge him, without additional furniture were purchased, and there was no money to spare."

"Aunt Flora, can you tell me the exact sum you derive from the rent of the store?"

"Not exactly—but Edith knows. I leased it for $2,000 per annum, many years ago. The lease has been renewed every three years, Edith having my authority to let it. I have not seen Mr. Milnor for a great while, nor been in the store since it was altered, and the marble front added. I suppose the expense was taken out of the rent; but I don't know; and I have an utter aversion to bills and figures."

"I have never known which store it was, aunt and I should like to see it when I pass up the street. Do you know the number?"

"I declare I don't remember. But you can find it by looking in the directory at the apothecaries'."

"I will do so. I understand all these bills are due, aunt: and Edith told me they couldn't be paid until the next quarter's rent fell due. Suppose I try my hand at this business for you?"

"If you have any taste for it, child, and will not let Edith know any thing about it, I am sure I can have no objection. You know Dr. McGlab said you ought to walk at least two hours every day."

"I think so, and I was always fond of walking. But I dislike going alone. Will you not go with me? The doctor said you ought to walk to avoid a plethora with which you are threatened."

"I am too indolent. I don't care what the doctor says. My health is nearly always good. But what is the matter with Edith? Do you not hear her sobbing?"

"I do indeed."

Edith entered the room with an open letter in her hand, and tears were streaming over her sallow cheeks.

"I'm ruined!" said she; "all my savings and earnings for ten years are gone!"

"Why, what do you mean? You frighten me, Edith!" said Miss Blount.

"Oh, my dear Miss Flora, bear with me, and don't suffer your dear nerves to be unhinged. It is all *my* loss, you are fortunately no sufferer. Read it, Miss Blount—read the terrible letter. But I beg you will be composed!"

It was a letter from Mr McCrabbed, her brother in Philadelphia, informing her that the money remitted him had been placed in the hands of a clergyman of their country for investment, and had been lost by his failure.

"Edith!" exclaimed Miss Blount, "you know I have a horror of figures. But I have never paid you any wages yet, as I intended to provide for you in my will, if you survived me. How, on earth, then, could you have lost $3,000 by this dishonest countryman of yours, and a clergyman, too? I am sure you had no money when you left Scotland, for I remitted the funds to pay your passage. But never mind, poor thing—see how she weeps—any other time will do to explain. I hate such things. Go into your room and become composed."

Edith made her escape, her usually pale face glowing with rage—for, acute as she was, she had inadvertently made an exposure of her gains which had not been at all necessary.

"Does it not seem to you, aunt, that there is something very extraordinary in this discovery?"

"I confess it seems inexplicable, Lucy. But I have a great repugnance to such things. I am in a tremor now, and can hear the palpitations of my heart. I must lie down. You can go, Lucy, and have your walk. Edith will not think of the bills any more to-day; and if you could contrive to have them paid by the Milnors, I am sure it would save Edith a deal of trouble."

Lucy soon after descended the dingy marble steps, and passing through the old iron gate which creaked on its hinges, and required all her strength to open, joined the ever-moving throng of pedestrians flowing into the great thoroughfare of the city. Wrapped in her furs, and radiant with health, the fine form and handsome face of Lucy could not fail to attract attention in any city; but in New York the curious glances were really oppressive. Nevertheless she was a brave girl, and had resolved to rescue her aunt from what she believed to be an iniquitous thraldom.

Glancing over the bills in her hand as she walked along, she was struck with the fact that a majority of her aunt's creditors were Macs, and Cummingses, and Campbells; for it had never occurred to her before, that the foreigners who flourish in our country, when once they obtain a foothold, are extremely clannish; and proscribing the natives, bestow their patronage on their own countrymen.

She called on several of the mechanics and tradespeople, and exhibiting their bills inquired if they did not seem a little exorbitant, remarking that she should obtain a list of

prices from others so as to enable her aunt to institute a comparison. In every instance there was an abatement of some twenty per cent, and she was informed that a similar reduction had always been made at the solicitation of Miss McCrabbed, although the bills were receipted in full as they were made out and presented.

Promising to attend to the settlement of their demands, Lucy proceeded next to the apothecary's, to ascertain the address of the Messrs. Milnor, her aunt's tenants. As she was entering the shop, she beheld Miss Bell Aram and Miss Susan Cradle standing near one of the counters, and luxuriating in a draught of soda water. She did not speak to them. She did not know whether they could recognize her features through her veil, which was down, and she did not desire to renew her acquaintance with them unless quite certain she had been recognized. At all events, if they desired to hold any conversation with her, they should be the first to speak. While she was looking into the directory, the young ladies withdrew, but not without casting several glances in her direction. She felt rather relieved than [illegible] that they had purposely avoided a recognition, or had not observed her particularly.

But a moment after she was appalled at beholding R[illegible] descending from a blue carriage near the apothecary's [illegible]; and he was waving a salute to the Misses Aram and Cradle, on the opposite side of the street. While his attention was attracted in that direction, Lucy hastily mingled with a party of ladies and gentlemen passing briskly along, and thus escaped his observation.

The store occupied by the Messrs. Milnor & Co. was found without difficulty. It was one of the most imposing business edifices in the street, and the firm of Milnor & Co. was one of the most reputable in the country. The senior [illegible] was a [illegible] and had accumulated his [illegible] [illegible]. He was [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. It was [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Lucy [illegible] passed open the great glass door [illegible] and entered with a [illegible] step, for she [illegible] perceived that it must be an unusual thing for ladies to enter an establishment where the merchan

dise was only disposed of by the entire piece, or package, and where nothing was to be seen on the counters but samples and pattern cards. There were some ten or a dozen well-dressed young men standing about in various directions, exhibiting samples to their customers; but no ladies were present.

The appearance of Lucy attracting the attention of the young men, which it could not fail to do, there was some whispering, and a great many intelligent and curious glances exchanged between the salesmen. Soon one of them approached, and with the utmost politeness and an ingenuous face, begged to be permitted to know the nature of the young lady's demand.

"I desire to see Mr. Milnor," said Lucy.

"My father is in the office, and I will conduct you to him with pleasure," said the young gentleman.

Reassured by the announcement that the young gentleman was the son of the principal of the firm, Lucy followed without hesitation, and they passed through another large glass door and entered a spacious office, handsomely carpeted, and containing sofas, mahogany chairs, and several fine paintings, and divers magnificent prints, by the best artists.

"Father, here is a young lady who desires to speak with you on business," said Henry Milnor, and at the same time placing a chair for Lucy. After which he withdrew.

The father was a tall handsome man, with beautiful silver-gray hair, an erect form, and a placid eye. He arose immediately from the table where he had been writing, with a smile on his lip, and said he would be happy to receive the commands of the lady.

"I called, sir," said Lucy, "with a message from my aunt, Miss Flora Blount——"

"Miss Flora Blount! And you are her niece! I am very, very happy to see you," exclaimed Mr. Milnor, proffering his hand to Lucy, and in such a cordial, parental manner, it was impossible to think of refusing it. "Why, my dear Miss," he continued, sitting down in one of the luxuriously cushioned chairs, "you can hardly be aware of the delight I experience on meeting one of the family of that lady. Here have I been some twenty or thirty years her tenant—and have really made my fortune on her premises, and yet have never had the pleasure of beholding her, or any of her kindred, more than

once or twice. It is true she has had a punctual representative, a business-like agent, as the Scotch people generally are, but I have repeatedly wished to meet with my landlady herself, and could never venture to call at her dwelling."

"I am sure my aunt will be rejoiced to hear of your prosperity."

"No doubt—everybody is. It is the universal practice. Would to heaven it were as common a thing to sympathize with the unfortunate! And perhaps your aunt would have done so. No doubt of it. But I should be happy to have known her more familiarly. She has an important estate in my custody, and I might impart information and advice in relation to it, of some value to her."

"I have not the least doubt of it, sir," replied Lucy, "and I regret exceedingly that my aunt should have so great a repugnance for the details of matters so deeply involving her interest. I am sure if she would avail herself of your counsels, there could hardly be any necessity for the adoption of so rigid a system of economy in her household——"

"Rigid economy! and in *her* household!" exclaimed Mr. Milnor, in unaffected astonishment. "My dear Miss Blount ——"

"Miss Winkle, if you please, sir."

"True—true—her sister married a Winkle, and you are her daughter. Then, my dear Miss Winkle, what you have just spoken fills me with amazement. Your aunt has no one to support but herself—she is certainly rich—and yet having to use economy! And with such a keen-sighted Scotch agent——"

"That agent, sir——I may impart my suspicions to you in confidence?"

"Most assuredly."

"Then during the few months I have dwelt with my aunt, I think I have ascertained that her agent, Miss Mc'rabbed, has acted improperly, very improperly, sir——"

"Speak on, Miss Winkle—you need not hesitate to disclose any thing of that nature to me."

"I believe, sir, she has acted dishonestly, and defrauded my aunt." Lucy then described the mode of her aunt's living, the matter of the bills, and the contents of the letter Mc'rabbed had received from Philadelphia, and which had been so injudiciously exhibited

"She is a rogue—no doubt. But she understands business. No real estate agent in the city could have managed this property better. I have expended ten thousand dollars on it, and still paid a heavy rent——"

"Pardon me, sir—but may I inquire how much my aunt, or rather Miss McCrabbed, has been receiving from you?"

"Six months ago the improvements and alterations were paid for, as per agreement, and the rent, according to the terms stipulated by Miss McCrabbed, remained, until that time, precisely what it was originally, $2,000. But since then, Miss Winkle, it has been materially increased, for it is a large lot, and in one of the best situations. In short, since the time specified, I am to pay for all repairs, for insurance, the taxes——"

"The repairs, sir?"

"Yes, it is so in the bond, and I was under the necessity of signing it."

"The taxes too?"

"Yes, truly. They are paid. I have the receipt here, a month old."

"Then my aunt has been most egregiously imposed on, for Miss McCrabbed told me this morning she would have to pay the taxes out of the next quarter's rent! And after defraying all these expenses, my aunt is still to have $2,000 per annum?"

"Two thousand? Yes, and four added to it. She is to receive $6,000, Miss Winkle; and I must say it is not an extravagant rent for a property which would sell for $100,000."

"Is it possible? Then my poor aunt need not be distressed——"

"Distressed? She is rich! Tell her I say so! And the lot she lives on would bring $50,000! Just to suppose any one, and especially a single lady, whose income might be some $10,000 per annum, fearing to be distressed!"

"Unfortunately," said Lucy, smiling, "the ladies are not generally very skilful in the management of business. I mean the America ladies. But still, I fear it will be no easy matter to convince my aunt of the culpability of Miss McCrabbed, who has so long enjoyed her confidence."

"And abused it," said Mr. Milnor. "Such proteges contrive to make themselves agreeable, and often indispensable, and then pillage their benefactors without stint."

"I fear, sir, my aunt has been a victim; but fortunately not to the extent she might have been if these developments had been postponed a few years longer. But really I had forgotten my aunt's message. She desired to ascertain whether you would oblige her by anticipating the day of the next payment—or rather advance her a sufficient sum to discharge these demands."

"With twenty per cent. off, you know. Most assuredly! She shall have a check for $1,500 and——"

"Oh, I beg pardon, sir! It has just flashed across my mind, that inasmuch as you have never seen me before——"

"No, no, no! I know what you would say. I knew your mother. You have her face exactly, and a most beautiful—I beg *your* pardon! But you are taller than she was——"

"Still, Mr. Milnor, you must permit me to have my own way in this matter. I have reasons for it. And I assure you it would be a great favor if you would bring the checks yourself to my aunt's house, and take her receipt. And you may perhaps be disposed to substantiate what I mean to tell her in relation to the conduct of Miss McCrabbed."

"Then leave the bills with me, Miss Winkle. I will first cause them to be paid. My son shall attend to it himself—and—perhaps, if my engagements prevent me from going to your aunt's house, Henry might answer the purpose?"

"If he knew the circumstances——"

"He shall know them, and also my opinion in the case. Your aunt will find him an intelligent boy—although he has resided abroad half of his life. Henry!" he continued, opening the figured glass door, and admitting his son—"this is Miss Winkle, the niece of Miss Flora Blount. You will conduct her to your mother's carriage, if it is still standing on the opposite side of the street, and order the coachman to drive to her aunt's house—that is if it be her purpose to return directly home—and if not, direct him to go whithersoever she pleases."

"By no means! But I thank you!" said Lucy, smiling, and slightly blushing, as the tall handsome figure of the young man bowed before her. "I shall prefer to walk. In the village where my mother dwells, I have been accustomed to much walking, and my physician says it is necessary."

The young man, however, conducted her with deferential politeness into the street, assuring her repeatedly that his

mother would not return to the carriage for an hour, and perhaps two, as she was sitting to an artist in the opposite building. Lucy, however, did not yield to his entreaties, but signified her gratitude for his kind attentions.

Again, when arrived in view of her aunt's dwelling the hated blue carriage of Roland met her view. It was just starting away from in front of her aunt's door, and she did not doubt now, that Miss McCrabbed was capable of plotting with her persecutor against her peace. The blue carriage had been seen in front of the house almost every day; and Miss McCrabbed had in all probability informed Roland of her place of abode. She had certainly mentioned his name more than once in her presence, and in terms of praise, which she recollected with a painful distinctness. She was now somewhat relieved on seeing the carriage move off in an opposite direction, so that she did not have to meet it when approaching the dwelling.

The door was opened by Miss McCrabbed, who suddenly seized Lucy's arm, when it closed.

"Give me the bills!" cried she. "Why did you take them? Did I not say you must never meddle with my business? You shall leave here, or I will! And we'll see who your aunt will be the most willing to part with!"

"I have not got the bills. But they are paid by this time. Release my arm!"

"I will not! The bills—who is to pay them?"

"No matter. Release my arm!"

"I will not."

"You shall!" said Lucy, burning with indignation, and hurling the slight form of the enraged woman away from her. Lucy was young and strong, and McCrabbed was thrown in contact with the wall, and slightly stunned by the collision.'

"Wretch!" cried she, recovering, "I'll be revenged!"

"Dishonest woman!" said Lucy, "your frauds have been discovered! The money remitted your brother did not belong to you. There will be a gentleman here presently to enlighten my aunt in regard to your sordid practices. Justice at last must always overtake the transgressor."

Without pausing to mark the effect of her words, Lucy hastened into the parlor, where she found her aunt re-perusing certain chapters of the "Children of the Abbey," perhaps for the fiftieth time.

"Lucy!" said Miss Flora, with a deep sigh, "do you think there really ever existed such a wretch as the Marquis of Rosline's housekeeper?"

"Indeed I do, my dear aunt: there are many such who would appropriate to themselves the money intrusted with them for the benefit of others, and who would not hesitate to introduce such villains as Belgrave——"

"Oh, horrible!"

"Dear aunt, *my* persecutor, Roland, has found out my place of abode: and I am sure it must have been by means of treachery. The blue carriage, which has been so often noticed by us, belongs to him."

"Is it possible? Why I saw the coachman speaking to Edith a little while ago! How did she know any thing about Roland?"

"It is impossible for me to say. But you know she has frequently mentioned his great wealth, and his *home* love, &c."

"True. What could have been her meaning?"

"She is one of the Rosline housekeepers."

"Lucy! Surely you do not think so!"

"I surely do. Listen to me, aunt." She then detailed all she knew in relation to the speculations of McCrabbed.

"Listen to my heart beating! Oh, my dear Lucy, what shall I do! You will not desert me, will you?"

"Certainly not, if you dismiss McCrabbed."

"She shan't stay an hour, if she has been guilty of these things, even if it breaks my heart! But how shall I manage without her?"

"I will undertake to see that nothing shall be wanting," said Lucy. "Mr. Milnor will send one or two of his servants until you can procure proper ones of your own. Remember you are rich, aunt, rich."

"True. I had forgotten it. Why, Lucy, I shall be able to keep a coach of my own!"

"To be sure you will. I hear the bell—it is Mr. Milnor's double knock. Again! Why don't Edith open the door? I will do it."

When Lucy threw open the door, she was startled by the appearance of Mr. Henry Milnor, when she had been expecting her father. Without delay, however, she conducted him into the parlor, and introduced him to her aunt. He delivered the bills he had paid, and showed where twenty per cent of the amount had been deducted. And he confirmed what

Lucy had said in regard to the misrepresentations of Miss McCrabbed. The taxes and repairs he assured Miss Blount were to be paid, and really had already been paid by his father; and besides, he was to make her the quarterly payment of fifteen hundred dollars. That sum he was now prepared to place in her hands, the amount of the bills he had just discharged deducted.

"Edith never informed me of this!" said Miss Flora. "And is it possible I have been so egregiously deceived by one in whom I placed such unlimited confidence?"

Mr. Henry Milnor said he had no doubt of it, and Lucy repeated her convictions of the treachery and ingratitude of the Scotch minion.

Mr. Milnor, before departing, informed Miss Flora, that his father had authorized him to say he would be happy to become the purchaser of the property in Broadway, at the price named to her niece.

"And what was that, Lucy?" asked Miss Blount.

"I believe it was $100,000."

"That was the amount," said young Milnor.

"Can it be possible?" cried Miss Blount. "Why, it was valued at just $20,000 when it came into my possession; and this house and lot at $10,000."

"My father," continued young Milnor, "says this property would sell for $50,000."

"Really, I never supposed such prices could be obtained. But this is the old family mansion, and I could never think of selling it. The other was purchased by my father of some one who owed him, and was never occupied by any of the family. But I never sold any thing in my life. I wonder what Edith——"

"Edith, aunt!"

"I forgot, child! Edith is fallen. But what would you advise, Lucy?"

"I think I would not sell it, aunt, since it brings you an ample income."

"My niece would not like to sell it, sir, and I have no doubt her notion is a very correct one."

Mr. Milnor rose to depart. But before taking his leave, said he had been charged by his father to make a tender of his services, and to beg that Miss Blount, or any member of her family, would never hesitate to apply to him for counsel,

or for any assistance, should it be desirable to make use of a friend. And, while bowing gracefully, the young gentleman added his own solicitations to those of his father, remarking that it would make him happy to be enabled to render any species of service.

He was thanked very earnestly by both the ladies and charged with kind acknowledgments to his father, of whom, Lucy remarked, she had determined to ask a favor that day, if it had been convenient for him to appear in person.

The young gentleman lingering on the threshold, as if bound by an irresistible fascination, assured her he would use his utmost endeavors to accomplish whatever might have been requested of his father. After some hesitation and blushing, Lucy mentioned her aunt's destitution of servants; and intimated that inasmuch as Miss McCrabbed had been detected in one moral delinquency, she was fearful it might not be safe to trust her any farther. In short, her aunt and herself might not be able to partake of any food of Edith's preparing or procuring, with the confidence necessary to their ease and, perhaps, their health. She had intended, therefore, to ask the favor of him to permit one of his servants to stay at her aunt's dwelling, until she could procure one or more of her own. The young man bowed again, and assured Lucy there would be no difficulty in obtaining his mother's assent to the arrangement, and he asked and obtained permission to call again that very evening.

After the departure of Mr. Henry Milnor, Miss Flora Blount, bracing her nerves for a stormy interview with Miss McCrabbed, proceeded to the usual sitting room, where the greater portion of her housekeeper's time was spent, accompanied by Lucy, who, impressed with the belief that Roland had received intelligence from the treacherous Edith, resolved to encourage and support her aunt in the trying scene which she supposed was about to be enacted.

But no McCrabbed was there; nor was she to be found in any part of the house, and every room in it was searched in vain. Undoubtedly she had fled, under the supposition that her offences might subject her to the pains and penalties of the law, as it is known the difference between the practice of our government and that of Great Britain. The idea of transportation filled her with terror. And so, after overhearing the conversation in the parlor, she had noiselessly brought down her

trunk, and summoning her boy McIlhenny, who preceded her to the depot, set off for Philadelphia to join her brother, and seek an asylum under his protection.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BLUE CARRIAGE—LETTERS FROM BABBLETON AND PHILADELPHIA. MRS. LAUREL'S VISIT.

In a few weeks Miss Flora Blount's mansion assumed a new appearance, without and within. The painter and paper-hanger had been employed; a furnace diffused its warmth throughout the house, and gas illuminated the halls and parlors. Two excellent servants, which had been recommended by the Milnors, were substituted for the false Edith, and Miss Flora readily expressed her opinion that the new system was less shocking to her nerves than the old.

But Lucy's nerves became more and more affected as she daily beheld Roland's blue carriage standing within a convenient distance of the door, as if in waiting for her. Her aunt was disposed to regard the circumstance as a romantic incident, and really believed the man was mad in love, and could not restrain himself from pursuing her niece. But as she watched the carriage from behind her curtains, she wondered why Roland himself was not visible as often as his coachman. More than half the time the vehicle was entirely empty. What a mystery! But the mysteries of bad men are mostly fraught with evil.

For more than a week after Lowe had discovered the place of Lucy's abode, he had been restrained from seeking an interview by the ominous presence of that carriage. Lucy, herself unseen, had observed him passing with his eyes sadly fixed upon Roland's equipage!

Finally his passion had overleaped all restraints, and he had sought and obtained an interview with the object of his affection. But unfortunately neither of them had referred to the subject of the blue carriage. Lucy had forgotten such an annoyance in the presence of Lowe; and Lowe, though it was never absent from his mind, could not find sufficient resolu-

tion to demand an explanation. But his face was pale, and his voice often tremulous, as if his heart were a prey to some hidden anguish which he durst not disclose

Lucy, attributing his melancholy to quite a different cause from the true one—seeing the badge of mourning on his hat—in vain expended her sympathy, and sought by her conversation and manner to manifest her concern. His sadness could not be dispelled, nor the rising tear always repressed. Yet scarcely a day was now suffered to pass, during which he did not spend more or less of his time at the old mansion, but it was generally in the company of other visitors, for a great change had taken place in the social habits of the inmates of the house, and there was scarcely an hour that some one did not call.

The famous Mrs. Laurel, after a lapse of twenty years, had renewed her intimacy with Miss Blount. Mrs. Laurel had then her sixth husband, and was enormously rich. Originally her position in society was good, and she was a schoolmate of the Blounts. But her father becoming bankrupt, she married one of the clerks in his office, and ran off to New Orleans, where an epidemic soon made her a widow, at the age of seventeen. Being still poor, she accepted the hand of a planter of middle age, who was killed the next week in a duel, but not before bestowing his fortune on her. She was now rich, and had learned the value of riches; and as she married in succession three other wealthy husbands in the South, all of whom in the course of twenty years were peacefully slumbering in the oblivious grave, while the favored widow, although past the flush of youth, still retained much of her original beauty, she returned to New York, and became the wife of Mr. Laurel, an eminent bibliomaniac, a famous traveller, a millionnaire, and the entertainer of distinguished foreigners. Therefore Mrs. Laurel was famous. But she had peculiarities of her own which would have made her distinguished aside from the celebrity of her husband. And one of these was her incessant talking—others in her company rarely being able to utter more than simple monosyllables. And it was remarkable that the subject of her interminable speeches was generally the difficulty she had in the management of her servants. Almost every time she rode out she was in quest of a cook, or chambermaid, or waiter. She had been so long accustomed to slaves in the South, that it seemed she

could never become habituated to the habits of northern domestics. And it was upon one of those voyages of discovery that she had accidentally met with Miss Blount, and renewed the acquaintance, and subsequently, after inquiries, and finding her old schoolmate possessed sufficient fortune, she resolved to re-establish the terms of intimacy which had in early times subsisted between the families. She was likewise powerfully stimulated to this end from a desire to exhibit the surpassing beauty of Lucy at her magnificent mansion.

The Milnors, too, were frequent visitors to Miss Blount and her niece, and an intercourse of the most agreeable character sprang from the accidental visit of Lucy to the store in Broadway. But this, however, was not unattended with misgivings on the part of Lucy, who soon began to apprehend that Henry Milnor, from his assiduous attentions, might seek to make a tender impression on her heart, which she deemed to be already sufficiently impressed by the image of another.

Pollen, too, had more than once called upon Lucy and her aunt, at the request of Walter, with whom he corresponded. The poet again possessed a shirt of his own, and otherwise exhibited a genteel exterior. He was in the employ of a brother poet, more favored by fortune, and earned a subsistence in the capacity of a regular contributor to the columns of a literary periodical. Nevertheless, whether in indigence or prosperity, Pollen seemed destined to be always the protegee of some lady of more mature years than himself; and now, of all the gentlemen that formed the agreeable society at the Blount Mansion, none enjoyed so large a share of the regard and esteem of Flora, as the reckless, intractable, and often rude poet. There was an irresistible attraction in his writings, imparted by his extraordinary genius, which, in Flora's opinion, made amends for his singular eccentricities. She admired his works, and thence her sympathy extended to the author and the man. It is strange that women should have a desire to possess that which is avowedly unattainable. The declaration of a poet that his heart has been long buried in the grave of some beautiful being exclusively worshipped and for ever lost, have never yet discouraged others of the sex, who have survived, from meditating their capture. Such being the result of Lucy's observation, it was not without some amusing anticipations that she witnessed the zeal of

[redacted]

her poor aunt in the endeavor to make a favorable impression on the poet. For to her acute vision it was apparent that Pollen had never earnestly conceived the idea of again entering into the bonds of wedlock, and above all for the mere purpose of obtaining a home and an independence which could not otherwise be realized. Walter had informed her of his conduct towards her aunt in Philadelphia, as well as of his rupture with Griselda; and as there was no reason to suppose her Aunt Flora's happiness might be sacrificed by any caprice of the poet, the growing intimacy did not give rise to any very serious apprehensions.

One afternoon when Lucy was sitting with her aunt in the room recently converted into a library, and in which were collected the thousands of novels which had hitherto been lying in disorder in all parts of the house, the postman sent in two letters, one for the aunt, and the other for the niece.

"Here is news from Babbleton," said Lucy, and narrated in my dear mother's merry vein. Listen, aunt—"Griselda still keeps my poor brother a close prisoner, while she dashes about in her coach and four. But she has cut all her poor acquaintances, and of course I am blotted out of her books. She passes without calling, and without knowing how heartily I laugh at the ridiculous figure she makes. But she patronized our minister, Mr. Amble, and that is a charitable expenditure, because the money will certainly reach the poor of the parish. Mr. A. you know, has either nine or thirteen (I forget which) children of his own, and they must be provided for. I suppose it is because I could render no assistance, that he has not called on me lately—not, I believe, since my house was sold. Perhaps he did not hear I was the purchaser * * * Still I think Roland is *love mad*. But his passion is two fold. He has laid regular siege to Virginia Oakdale, who is my guest, and opens his batteries once or twice every week, and then disappears most mysteriously. I presume he occupies his blue carriage on the alternate days. Virginia never refuses to see him, but the spirited girl laughs at his pretensions, and banters him in such a mocking manner that he must soon despair of making any progress. Why do you not treat him in the same way? Or why do you not marry him and then have your revenge? It is so absurd to see men of fortune running after the girls, and vainly teasing them for a smile. Marry them, and they will run the other

way. Walter is still at Washington, and has not yet received his appointment. I believe he has ceased writing to Virginia. What does it mean? More tomfoolery? Lowe has been absent some time—and I suppose you have seen him. Remember! * * * We had an exciting scene in the street the other day. Sergeant Blore, when stumping on his way to see me, was seized by Mrs. Edwards. She demanded his money—and he cried murder! He tripped her up with his wooden leg and made his escape. But it seems he sprained her ankle, and she has since threatened to bring "an haction" against him for "hassault" and battery! You see how husbands are served! Bill Dizzle gallants Patty O'Pan to church every Sunday. I wrote you how Patty mortally affronted the Arums and Crudles. She kept up till Bill and Susan beat a retreat. It has been a mystery to me how the impudent hussy obtained the means to perpetrate such an annoyance. Some of her finery must have cost a great deal of money, and no one ever supposed Lowe possessed a superabundance of it. By the way, I forgot to mention that Bell Arum has written home a precious budget of news, which her mother, as usual, has published to all her acquaintances. She says she saw you examining the register, and that you were in the habit of wandering about alone and unprotected. She says Mr. Lowe is likewise in the city; and if her ma would put *that* and *that* together, she would know as much as the writer, no doubt! And she says they have an invitation to the aristocratic Mrs. Laurel's parties, and that some of the British nobility of the highest rank are expected over this winter. But (she says) if L. W. and Mr. L. are to be met there, she is determined to expose them.

"Your poor old Mother,

"E. WINKLE.

"P. S. I see our old friend John Dowly every week. Bless his good soul! He sends a mountain of love. What a pity we grow old!"

The letter received by Flora was from Miss Wilsome Winkle, and ran as follows: "My impudent nephew Walter, who *will persist* in writing me, notwithstanding I have cast him off for sanctioning his uncle's marriage with that vulgar bonnet-maker (I forget her name), informs me that Mr. Pollen, the silly poet who abandoned my hospitality to borrow a few

dirty dollars of the milliner, is now working himself to death in New York to earn a scanty living, which he might have had for nothing by remaining here and behaving himself. He is a fool—just like other poets who have genius, and therefore ought not to be permitted to kill himself. Enclosed I send a check for a trifling sum payable to bearer, which, perhaps, with delicate management you may induce him to make use of for his own benefit. Perhaps he needs some new shirts. I have seen him twice without any—and I believe he has one of Walter's yet. Speaking of checks and of Walter, I gave my cast-off nephew one when he was on his way to that Babylonian rendezvous of demagogues, which, for some reason—or rather for the want of reason—he did not use. I suppose he gave it to some fool or other poorer than himself. But the cashier of the bank did not pay the money. There needed Walter's name on it, he said, written with his own hand, as it was drawn to his order, or something of the sort, which I did not understand, and did not choose to inquire about. Walter says Lucy is with you. Tell her I have five letters from Ralph Roland begging me to intercede for him. I believe him a knave—but if he writes me again I shall also believe him in earnest, and that the rascal is absolutely in love. It would be a better match than her uncle's, which she attended.

"Enough in all conscience.

"WILSOME WINKLE.

"P. S. I have a letter of invitation from that Blackbeard of a woman, Mrs. Laurel, to attend her parties this winter. Before I signify my acceptance, I should like if possible to learn whether or not there will be a room exclusively for whist. On no other conditions will I go—and you may tell her so.

"W. W."

Miss Blount, after joining Lucy in a hearty laugh at the contents of the letter from Babbleton, did not seem disposed to be so mirthful over the communication from Philadelphia.

"I have to do it," said Miss Blount, "that the poet may be quite as agreeably entertained in New York as in Philadelphia. And I don't see why Wilsome should be sending her checks after him. I have contributed fifty dollars myself to enable him to commence the publication of a new paper, which is to be entirely under his control, is to contain everything he writes, and he is to write what he pleases. I have

no doubt he will succeed. I shall bespeak Mrs. Laurel's influence, and you must be a subscriber, Lucy——"

"Certainly, aunt. But what do you think of my persecutor, Roland?"

"He is either the best lover or the worst man in the world."

"But which of the two?"

"I cannot say. But I am sure he has not a particle of the poet's genius."

"But some of his foolishness?"

"Wilsome is a strange creature. To call the author of —— a fool! It is too bad."

"But what are we to do about Mrs. Laurel's parties? Bell Arum——"

"Oh, never mind her—she is merely one of the Kilcorbans—an upstart, dazzled with the glitter of her own jewels, because she has not always been accustomed to them. Mrs. Laurel must have the poet there. I am sorry her husband does not have a more favorble opinion of American writers."

"I am sure, aunt, that until recently you could hardly be induced to read an American book."

"I confess it, child. But what was the reason? The critics I relied on in making my selections, scarcely ever noticed American novels. All their praises were bestowed upon foreign productions. Mr. Pollen drew my attention to the subject, and I am sure I can never be sufficiently grateful for it. Our writers are quite as interesting as any others. What an inexhaustible treasure of enjoyment there is in store for us!"

"The L, alluded to by Miss Arum, is doubtless Mr. Lowe."

"And I like him very much. Mr. Pollen says he is the best educated gentleman he has met with since he left college. But he is too melancholy."

"He may have some secret sorrow, aunt."

"Then why don't he make you his confidant? Mr Pollen has explained to me the amount of his suffering, induced by the injustice or neglect of the critics. But he shall be a critic in his turn; and then those who would not do him the justice to judge him fairly, may require favors at his hands! But he will be just, impartial—independent and fearless."

The bell was heard, followed by a rustling of silk, and

the next moment the vivacious Mrs. Laurel was sailing into the room.

"No ceremony, my dear Blount—no perturbation, my sweet Winkle! I have called but for a moment. I must rattle through twenty streets, until I can find a character——

"Character, Mrs. Laurel?" asked Lucy.

"Yes, character, my pretty child. A character for my new chamber maid. The last one had no character—and she didn't deserve one, for she was worthless. What do you think? She had the impudence to change her dress and fix her hair, before appearing in the presence of Mr. Laurel in his library! The impudent hussy—setting her cap for my husband, and before my very eyes! I drove her away and carried in the foot-bath myself. And now I have a pock-marked English woman, who uses the h in saying air and leaves it out in saying horse. But I don't mind that, if she's honest; and I am now going the rounds to inquire about her character. There never was such a place for servants! I shall lose my cook next. The kitchen don't suit her. The range is not to her liking, and the pots are too thick and heavy. I am aggravated almost to *death*, by my servants. I pay them about double wages, and it only seems to make them worse. How do you manage yours, Flora?"

"Me? Oh, I never meddle with them."

"And do they stay and perform their duty?"

"I believe so," said Flora.

"They behave very well," said Lucy.

"You are the most lucky person in the world, and I am the most unfortunate. I called just to say you must not for the world stay away from my first night. It will be a grand affair. The Countess and the young Earl will be there. Mr. Laurel knew the old Earl, and often dined at his house in town, Harley street, Cavendish square, and hence he is an old acquaintance of the Countess's."

"What Countess and Earl?" asked Flora.

"Haven't you heard? It's all in the papers. The most romantic thing in the world. The old Earl of Hilton was killed in Napoleon's wars, and left two sons. The eldest, and the one who succeeded him, was dissipated, wild, and trifling. The younger was just the reverse in every thing, and therefore he was disposed by the new lord. Hunting together one day, the Earl's horse took fright and threw him. He was stunned and

insensible a long time, but his brother succeeded in bearing him to the castle, where he was surrounded by his vile crew, who charged the young man with having contrived some plan to frighten the horse, so that his brother might be killed, and he succeed him. The earl himself was induced to express the same opinion, and the younger brother, turning away with tears in his eyes, resolved they should never have another opportunity to bring a similar accusation against him. So he sped to London, and taking leave of his mother, from whom he had a moderate income, his elder brother never having granted him any thing, he came to this country."

"To this country?" repeated Flora.

"Yes, to the United States. That was several years ago. Most of his time has been spent on the plains, for he was exceedingly fond of wild adventure. But he assumed another name—I am so forgetful I can't recollect it—but no matter. Well, his brother was killed by his horse at last in some sort of a break-neck race—I don't remember what they call it—but it can hardly be desirable sport. So the younger brother is now the Earl of Hilton, and the countess, his mother, is to arrive in the next steamer, and will be my guest."

"Where is the earl?" asked Miss Blount.

"Oh, he is somewhere in the city. Mr. Laurel has seen him. But he is still incognito. All his letters from his mother, for several years past, have been directed to Mr. Laurel. They will both be there, you may rely upon it. And I must collect a party of genteel Americans to show to the countess. The earl, by this time, has seen all sorts of people."

"You must have my friend, the poet, there," said Miss Blount.

"Pollen? Mr. Laurel says his poetry is tolerable. If I could be sure he wouldn't get drunk——"

"Drunk, Mrs. Laurel!"

"Don't you know a glass of wine sometimes intoxicates or maddens him?"

"No! Bless me, is it so?"

"It is, indeed. But I'll send him a note. I have only ninety names yet. There must be a hundred. Oh! I forgot to tell you how Mr. Laurel served me. He declares I have seen and conversed with this young nobleman twenty times without knowing it; and that he has frequently dined with

us! Did ever any other husband keep such secrets from his wife? They wouldn't trust me! I'll be revenged on the earl when the mask is removed."

"And you don't know him yet?" asked Lucy.

"No, upon my word! Mr. Laurel, you know, has the gout, and never leaves the house—so I don't see any of his friends, but those who visit him, and——"

"But can't you guess?" continued Lucy. "It seems to me if he had dined at my table——"

"Oh, bless you, sweet soul! we have dozens to dinner every day. Mr. Laurel cannot enjoy his dinner without company. I might as well attempt to recollect all I saw in the street last Monday, as to go over the list of our dining guests. There are always covers for twelve. I'll see about that post of yours, my dear Blount. You know there is a committee of ladies to be consulted. If he only had wealth it would go far in his favor. Wealth is indispensable now. But genius ought to atone for the want of it, as well as naval caps and duels. He shall have my vote. Good day!"

And, not permitting a reply, the loquacious matron departed.

Immediately Miss Blount sought for the paper containing the story of the incognito nobleman, and found it to correspond very nearly with the narration of Mrs. Laurel whose husband, indeed, had written it for the journal.

Presently another visitor was announced, and shown into the parlor. This was Mr. Quince McCrabbed, the brother of Flora.

"Mercy on me!" exclaimed Flora; "he's come to talk about Edith—perhaps with a message and reproaches to me. If so, I shall not be able to compose myself for the opera. My nerves will be all unstrung."

"Let me see him, aunt," said Lucy.

"If you please, child, and you know as much about the matter as I do. Only send him away as quickly as possible, and tell him never to shock my nerves again."

"Never fear, aunt," said Lucy, as she withdrew with a resolute step.

"Mr McCrabbed, I believe?" said Lucy, upon entering the parlor, and confronting the wrinkled, jaundice-faced Scotchman.

"I am the brother of Edith McCrabbed," said he, "and

I have called, at her request, to see Miss Blount about her salary. I suppose you are Miss Blount's niece, and the one who supplanted Edith. Edith says she has never been paid for her services, and has signed no receipts——"

"I beg your pardon, sir; but she signed a great many, of which my aunt was never informed until recently."

"That has nothing to do with my business here. I came to collect the salary of my sister, and if there are any items by way of offset, they may be deducted."

"Then I presume the three thousand dollars she sent you may be deducted first."

"Three hundred, miss."

"No; three thousand. We saw the letter."

"You must have looked at it carelessly. It is a mistake. Edith kept the letter?"

"No, sir; a good Providence caused her to leave it when she absconded."

"Indeed!" McCrabbed had feared it; but still hoped his sister might have lost the letter elsewhere. "Will you be kind enough to permit me to see it, miss, that I may show you it was written down three hundred instead of three thousand?"

"I am sorry the opportunity to do so cannot be afforded you. Mr. Milnor, who is now my aunt's agent, has possession of it, as well as other papers in relation to your sister's frauds——"

"Frauds, miss? Such language is actionable!"

"Frauds—if pilfering and robbing be frauds. Mr. Milnor has already ascertained that your sister defrauded my aunt to the amount of $7,000; and he supposes the sum will be greatly increased by future develôpments. Your sister is in Philadelphia, I suppose?"

"Yes—no—she—good day, miss," said the terrified Scotchman, hastily departing.

"How can you appear so calm, my dear child," said Flora, when Lucy rejoined her, "after an interview with that vile woman's brother?"

"My nerves are made of wire, as Mr. Lowe says," replied Lucy. "But Mr. Milnor had anticipated something of the sort, and furnished me with matter for a threatening speech, which soon put him to flight."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MISS FLORA BLOUNT AND LUCY GO TO THE OPERA, AND RETURN IN THE BLUE CARRIAGE—DR. McGAB PROPOSES.

At the hour appointed, quite a fine hired carriage was at the door of the Blount mansion. This was Lucy's suggestion; for she did not think her aunt quite rich enough to keep an equipage of her own, and she did not suppose such an establishment was necessary to maintain a good position in society. They were *born* in a good circle, and hence they belonged to the "privileged class," as it was termed by the envious parvenues. But they had a front seat at the opera: which, however, was more for their own enjoyment, than for the purpose of making a display.

Nevertheless, they did make an unrivalled display. Most beautiful at all times, Lucy was perfectly enchanting in the full glare of the chandeliers. A thousand eyes rested on her, and inquiries in regard to the "perfect angel," were whispered in all parts of the house.

Mr Pollen occupied a seat between Lucy and her aunt, and, being in the vein, entertained them with judicious criticisms on the comparative merits of the performers.

"That pale girl," said he, "in the chorus, has a finer voice than the prima donna. Listen! But she is an American, and is paid but five dollars a week. If they had her in Paris a couple of years, by changing her name so as to make it terminate with an i, she might earn $500 a night; and that, too, in her own country, provided the place of her nativity were kept a profound secret."

"Mr Pollen, do you not hate your own country?" asked Lucy.

"I hate its errors and blemishes."

"But is it not the same, and has it not always been the case, with other countries? You know a prophet is not without honor, except in his own country."

"True, but should we not profit by the errors of other nations? The people of our great country should despise the servile practices of European nations."

"Nevertheless," continued Lucy, "we sometimes have our revenge."

"Yes!" said Miss Blount, having recovered from a paroxysm of ecstasy, into which she had been thrown by the finale of the first act; "for the London *Times*, brought by the steamer to-day, is filled with praises of an American actress—a Miss Delia Glass."

"I saw the eulogiums," said Pollen. "Her fortune is made. And if you had looked among the advertisements, you would have seen a bookseller's announcement of an illustrated edition of my works. What publisher here would have undertaken such an enterprise? None, not one. I have tried them all. But I shall not derive a particle of pecuniary advantage from the publication—not one cent. It is a retaliatory measure. Our members of Congress, better capable of appreciating the value of dollars, and the votes of paper-makers and bookbinders, than the brains of authors, have refused to foster a national literature; and in consequence the country is inundated with republications of European books, whose authors can derive no compensation from our publishers."

"But, being indorsed by the British critics," said Lucy, "your countrymen will now recognize your pretensions, and acknowledge your merit."

"Oh, yes, in time. And they will ultimately purchase my works. But then I will be in my grave. Too late! too late! Excuse me." The poet hastily withdrew, quivering with an excessive agitation.

"He'll be back soon," said Miss Blount. "But, my dear Lucy, I hope you will in future avoid that subject. It always produces an uncontrollable excitement. The poor poet has been the victim of the critics."

"I will remember, aunt. I wonder what can be the reason Mr. Lowe has never looked in this direction?" continued Lucy, observing that her aunt was regarding the young gentleman, who stood near the orchestra.

"I cannot conjecture," said Flora. "I have been striving for some time to catch his eye, but in vain. And yet he is constantly casting his glances above us. Who can he see there?"

The aunt and niece turned involuntarily, and beheld the face of Roland behind them. He was standing near the door, in the next box to them. He bowed to Lucy, but she did not return it. Lowe, who had seen only the motion of Roland,

turned his eyes away, and gazed at the Misses Arum and Crudle, in an opposite box.

Lucy was pained at the occurrence, and turned her face aside in sadness.

"Who is that man?" asked Miss Blount.

"Roland," was the faint reply.

"So it is! I should have known him, as often as I have seen him recently in the blue carriage. But he is more handsomely dressed than usual, and is quite a fine looking man for one of his age. Well, well, he's gone. Cheer up, my child! There is no danger here. Can you tell me who are those impudently bejewelled girls over yonder, with their glasses continually pointed at us?"

"Oh, yes," said Lucy, recovering from her dejection. "They are the belles of Babbleton. The representatives of all the Arums and Crudles—rich and——"

"Fools! as your Aunt Wilsome would say. I do believe they are talking scandal about us, and to all the eager young gentlemen fluttering around them. Did you ever see such airs—such affectation?"

"I suppose they have been saying, they disliked the idea of attending Mrs. Laurel's parties, if we are to be there."

"No doubt they will tell everybody—for everybody seems to have access to them—that Mrs. Laurel has sent them notes of invitation. But here comes my poet, radiant with smiles."

This was true. Pollen resumed his seat in high spirits, and announced that he had just met a bookseller in the lobby, who made him a flattering proposition. Lucy intimated that the British appreciation of his merit had probably incited the bookseller to make the offer; and the poet did not doubt the truth of her conjecture.

At the end of the next act, Pollen, in the exuberance of his gay humor, poured an incessant volley of words into the ear of Miss Blount, and of course he had an attentive listener. And Lucy, apparently neglected, and looking in vain for the one who had monopolized her thoughts, was conscious of a slight movement behind, and the next moment was surprised by the voice of Lowe, who calmly took possession of an unoccupied seat on her left. In vain she strove to arrest the scarlet flood which rushed into her cheeks, and spread over her temples and forehead.

"I saw Roland bow to you to-night," said Lowe, in a half whisper.

"He did," was the reply.

"You could not forbid it; you could not prevent him——"

"No, no, I could not. I turned away from his gaze as quickly as I could. But why do you still mention his name? After the occurrence on the night of my uncle's—you know perfectly well what I allude to—it would be doing me great injustice to suppose I could pardon his conduct, or admit him again, voluntarily, into my presence."

"He must be the most mendacious man that ever existed! Do you know he has reported at one of the clubs he attends, that you have obtained his permission to use his carriage as your own?"

"No; I did not know he had slandered me thus. His carriage! Oh, Mr. Lowe, I have desired to mention the subject of his carriage to you, but could never have the resolution to say what I so anxiously wished. And this is not the place. Will you not accompany us home after the opera?"

"I cannot. I am sorry I am otherwise engaged. I came with a lady, now in one of the private boxes——"

"I will not ask who she is," said Lucy, "nor seek to know if she gazes at you, or watches your steps, or——"

"Oh, Lucy, do not attempt a retaliation. My heart is only for you. You may break it——"

"I break it!"

"You may crush it, and then it can never be offered to another. Henceforth, it can be of no value to any one."

"Why will you distress me thus? Oh, Edmund! if you but knew the misery you inflict by such unjust suspicions; if you would but hear me, and believe my words, which are true—and would be equally as frank and confiding——"

"To-morrow I will see you. And—and soon—very soon, there will be an end to my mystery, which has been only a source of unhappiness—an inevitable——but the curtain rises, and I must hasten back to my companion—who, by the way, Lucy, is quite as old as your mother. Adieu."

After Lowe left her, Lucy, instead of beholding Roland, had the pleasure to see Henry Milnor approach, and occupy the seat at her elbow. He remained until the bell rang for the final act; and he sought by every means in his power to dispel the slight cloud of gloom which he thought might be

discerned on the fair brow of Lucy. And it was measurably dispersed by his fascinating powers of conversation. He pointed out the lions and the most distinguished belles of the city to her, and related many innocent anecdotes of them, which interested his fair listener.

"But I have not the happiness to be acquainted with all the belles of Babbleton," said he, directing her attention towards the opposite box, where Bell Arum and Susan Cradle were apparently straining their eyes to catch every attitude and motion of the occupants of the box in which he was sitting.

"I supposed," said Lucy, "by this time the ladies opposite would have been known by all the gentlemen—I mean the fashionable gentlemen."

"And why, pray?"

"Because they are reputed to be rich. But *you* are not a fashionable gentleman. You told me so yourself. Their names, then——"

"Oh, I know their names," said Milnor.

"That was all I meant," continued Lucy. "I could not suppose all the gentlemen had cultivated their acquaintance. Such an attempt would not allow the poor belles sufficient time to take their food."

"And they would incontinently perish."

"That is malicious. But they have been telling tales, as Mr. Lowe informs me. He says they have given the history of my family to their eager auditors. Do you know any of the delighted young gentlemen who seem to be their worshippers."

"I know the names and occupations of several of them—and I think it probable they have mentioned my name, if the young ladies are at all inquisitive."

"Inquisitive! Let your shafts fall exclusively on the ruder sex."

"Very well. One of their admirers is a hair dyer——"

"A what?"

"He certainly keeps a little shop, in which a liquid hair dye is sold. The tall one, with the large diamond pin and the enormous seal. The fat one is a sample clerk in a British commission house. He was in the store the day you came, striving to sell us a package of lawns. The one with the moustache, is a music teacher, I believe. I know he belongs to a band hired by picnic parties, and by steamboats that go

on excursions of pleasure. But he is unobtrusive and gentlemanly in his demeanor; and doubtless entitled to make a fortune by marrying, if any heiress should see proper to have him. The modest young man sitting behind the ladies, is a very respectable scrivener. His father was an eminent lawyer, but unfortunate in his speculations. He is likewise preparing for the bar, and no doubt will deserve, and achieve success. I don't think he will marry a fortune, from the fact that his rivals have the knack of saying more smart things than himself. I suppose the full-chested beau, with his thumbs in his vest holes, and whose voice can sometimes be distinguished at this distance, and whose laughter is heard all over the house, will win a prize. He is the son of an auctioneer, of some fortune. There are two members of the press just entering—but the curtain rises. Adieu!"

At the end of the performance, a shower of bouquets alighted upon the stage. Many of them were thrown from the box of the heiresses—and as many were retained by the belles, for their own gratification, being the tributes of one of their admirers, whose father was a fashionable horticulturist.

When Lucy and her aunt were conducted by Pollen along the densely thronged lobby towards the door opening on the street, they were followed by Lowe, who was attending the elderly lady which had been alluded to by him. She was very fair, and quite as fat as Miss Blount; and Lucy could not avoid hearing her expressions of admiration, when, upon turning her head, the lady had obtained a view of her features. No doubt, thought she, Lowe had been speaking of her to his companion, and the supposition was not a painful one.

Arrived at the great steps in front of the theatre, there was some difficulty in finding their carriage. At length they were accosted by a small boy, who asked if their names were not Blount. Miss Flora answered in the affirmative.

"Then here's your carriage," said the boy. "The driver can't leave the horses in this jam." And it was a jam. Carriages were interlocked, and the people were struggling in every direction.

As Pollen pushed through the dense crowd, following the boy, Lucy beheld Roland a few paces in advance, and a chill ran through her veins. But now they had reached the carriage, the door of which was held open by the accommodating lad.

"Here, my lad," said Flora, putting a shilling in his hand.

"Thank'ee, mum," said he.

As Lucy stepped in, she cast a look behind, and was startled to observe Lowe, standing on one of the steps in the vicinity. The rays of the lamp fell upon his face and she saw he was deathly pale. And as she vanished, he clasped his forehead with his hand, and turned away, just when the driver cracked his whip. The horses moved off briskly, while Pollen was with great glee informing Miss Flora that his portfolio contained a sufficient quantity of manuscripts to make a volume of the size demanded by the bookseller; and that he anticipated decided success, from the fact that he had written much of it in great distress of mind, and when out of favour with the world. He said that most of the great productions had been written under similar circumstances, which seemed to have caused an unusual concentration of mind on the subjects treated, and a more perfect abstraction from other objects and influences.

Lucy remained silent, and lost in unpleasant surmises, until the carriage stopped at her aunt's door. Then, upon descending to the pavement, it was discovered that they had been taken home in Roland's blue carriage! The lamp near which they alighted revealed the mistake they had made, and Flora and Pollen laughed very heartily at the occurrence. It was different with poor Lucy. She knew it was no inadvertence. She felt an agony at her heart, and clung to Pollen for support. Lowe had seen her enter the carriage, which he knew to be Roland's. That was the explanation of his despairing pallor and extraordinary gesture on the steps of the theatre. How, then, could she explain, the next morning? Would he call upon her, according to the appointment, after what he had witnessed?

The carriage drove off, and the one that had taken them to the theatre arrived in great haste.

"It was not my fault, madam," said the coachman. "They pushed me away from the front. I was hunting you, and saw you just when you was stepping up. I hallooed, but you couldn't hear me in the crowd. It wasn't my fault. But there was some foul play. I'll see who did it."

"Never mind, John," said Miss Flora. "It was only an amusing adventure. Don't get into a quarrel with any one on account of it."

"Aunt," said Lucy, in an earnest tone, "pray let us go in. I am ill."

They entered the house immediately. Upon beholding her niece, Flora exclaimed in alarm, that the dear girl was fainting, and caught her in her arms.

"No, aunt," said Lucy, feebly; "I am not fainting. But I am not well. Pray conduct me to my room."

"Mr. Pollen!" cried Flora, "please go for the doctor—Dr. McGab!"

"No, aunt! I will be better, soon. But if not, do not send for him, if you have no one else's recommendation but Miss McCrabbed's."

"Oh, he is a good physician."

"I am better, aunt. I shall not require a doctor, I hope."

But she did seem to require one the next day. After a restless night, she arose in the morning with a violent headache. And when the hour appointed by Lowe to see her had passed, and no communication from him had been received explaining the cause of his failure to attend, she seemed so much worse, that her aunt was alarmed, and again entreated her to let Dr. McGab be sent for. Lucy, not deeming it a case wherein the Esculapian might be usefully employed, still resisted. Her aunt then became very miserable herself. Lucy, she was quite sure, was very ill, or would be soon, and she feared she would be disappointed in the exhibition of her beautiful niece at the great party, where a living countess and a real lord would be present. Such apprehensions shocked her nerves to such a degree, that she was under the necessity of calling in the doctor for her own benefit.

Dr. McGab was a tall gentleman, with red hair, and an intellectual face, said by some to resemble Thomas Jefferson's. His practice was pretty extensive, and as he possessed one of the essential characteristics of his country—an almost miraculous economy—he was growing wealthy. His income might increase—his expenditures never.

The doctor entered the parlor where Lucy was sitting alone.

"Good morning, Miss Winkle," said he, sitting down beside her on the sofa. "I am sorry to see you looking so badly. A little nervous excitement, perhaps; your aunt is a

victim to it. I hope it is not hereditary. I hope not, truly, truly, truly."

Lucy smiled at his earnestness of manner, and his habitual repetition of the final word of his sentences.

"No, doctor," said she, "I think not."

"But you don't look well, not well, not well."

"A headache, merely. It was my aunt——"

"I know. My professional visit is to her. I will see her when she is ready. She must put on a ribbon, or something of the sort, before I can be admitted. The ladies are all alike. The doctor must be delayed for some adjustment of costume or furniture, even in cases of imminent danger. All alike, alike, alike."

"I am sure, doctor, you ought to be flattered by it," replied Lucy.

"I am—when the delay is not too long—and it cannot be in this instance, instance. But the door opens for me, and I may go up, now, now. I will leave my gloves with you, you, you," continued the doctor, striding away.

He found Miss Flora prostrated by the severest attack she had ever experienced, and really requiring his aid. After writing a prescription, and leaving particular directions for her to remain as nearly as possible immovable, he returned to the parlor.

"How is my aunt, doctor?" asked Lucy.

"The attack is severe, severe. She must not be startled—not disturbed. I have sent for the medicine. She orders me to see you. Your pulse, pulse," he continued, taking the wrist of Lucy in his hand

"I hope my case will not require medicine, doctor," said she.

"No. But it is not right—not right. Your tongue, tongue. Nothing, nothing. Good constitution—some little excitement. No medicine—no medicine."

"I am glad to hear it, doctor"

"So am I so am I. Be well to-morrow, or next day—next day. Met'rabbled gone, eh? Bad woman."

"She was indeed, doctor."

"Sorry for it, sorry for it Countrywoman of mine, mine. But better as it is. Miss Blount's own niece, heir, heir, heir."

"Pray release my wrist, doctor," said Lucy, almost

alarmed at the violence of the grasp with which the doctor held it.

"Certainly," said the doctor, releasing her wrist, but retaining her hand, and sliding down on his knee; "Miss Winkle," he continued, "I am a bachelor. Not old—not old. I love you, have loved you, ever since I saw you first, first, first——"

"Dr. McGab!"

"Seriously, seriously, seriously. Upon my honor, honor, honor. Is there hope, hope, hope?"

"I fear not, doctor!" said Lucy, springing up, and with difficulty preserving her gravity of countenance.

"Say hope, hope, hope!" continued the doctor, still resting on one knee.

"I cannot. I must not deceive you. I fear it is a desperate case," she added, turning away, and holding her handkerchief to her mouth.

"Think of it, think of it," said the doctor, rising. "Pause—reflect—no hasty prognosis—um—the profession! Dream on it, dream on it. See you again, again, again," continued he, withdrawing.

"There are your gloves, doctor," said Lucy.

"True—nervous myself, myself, myself," he kept repeating, until he passed out of the hall door and disappeared in the street.

Then Lucy threw herself down on the sofa, and in spite of all her endeavors to the contrary, gave vent to a prolonged fit of laughter. And when this subsided, she was surprised to find her head had ceased to pain her. The doctor had certainly effected a cure.

It was, perhaps, fortunate that Lucy's spirits had made such a rebound. The depression which had afflicted her, if not dispelled, would have rendered her incapable of bearing with fortitude that which was to follow. For, not many minutes after the departure of Dr. McGab, and when she was sitting beside her aunt, a letter was placed in her hand by a servant, who said the bearer did not await a reply. Lucy knew the writing—but steeled her heart to bear with equanimity whatever might be traced by her suspicious lover—for in that light she could not avoid regarding him—while at the same time she could not deny that he had ample cause to be filled with doubt and apprehension. Yet she felt that she

could not quite forgive him for entertaining a mistrust, which would have instantly vanished if his decision had been delayed until he had obtained an explanation.

"Read the letter, child," said Miss Flora. "I am much better, since your color has returned. What a strange thing is sympathy! It seems to me the relief you have obtained has likewise relieved me, in a great degree"

"I wish, aunt," said Lucy, "you were sufficiently recovered to hear me with composure—before I break the seal of this letter."

"Who is it from? I am composed, now. What would you say?"

"Oh, it is a long tale—a——"

"Love tale?"

"Yes."

"Then I can hear it!" said Flora, rising on her elbow "Such tales never shock my nerves; on the contrary, they tranquillize me. It will cure me, Lucy. I desire you will proceed."

Lucy related every thing which had occurred between herself and Lowe, up to the moment when she saw him strike his forehead, as she unconsciously entered the blue carriage.

"It is a romance!" said her aunt, rising. "You see it has nearly cured me. I will rise and sit by the fire. But who is Mr. Lowe?"

"I know not—but I suspect——" said Lucy, and she would say no more.

"He seems to be a gentleman," said her aunt.

"Oh, yes."

Read his letter, Lucy. No doubt he reproaches you. If he does, what will you do? Make up your mind for the worst, and then——"

"I think I shall not faint, aunt—nor even turn pale. He should have seen me—should have heard me. I will read it aloud—and withhold nothing from you."

"That is a dear child," said Flora, kissing her.

The letter was as follows: "Our eyes met as you were entering Roland's carriage. The wound which I experienced then, I fear can never be healed. After beholding what I did, of course you could not be prepared to see me to-day. Oh, Lucy! you will never meet with a truer heart than mine! No one will ever adore you as I have done—as I still do—

for I cannot forbear to love you, deeply wounded as I am. I write incoherently, in unison with the confused ebullition of my feelings. And is such to be the termination of my happy dream? My mystery was upon the eve of a solution—I was about to vindicate my pretensions in open day, challenging the whole world to suggest any good reason why you should not be mine—mine irrevocably. But—how bitterly have I been disappointed!—I will not say deceived—for reproaches were useless. Farewell! This is the last line you will ever receive from LOWE."

Lucy was not violently agitated, nor excessively pale; but she uttered a low sigh, and felt an oppression at her heart.

"Do not believe him, Lucy. He loves you dearly," said her aunt, "and will never abandon the pursuit until you discard him."

"That he supposes I have already done," said Lucy, sadly smiling through the glittering tears which relieved her. "But he should have seen me, and heard me. One word of explanation would have been sufficient."

"Pshaw! Lucy, have you not read novels enough to know there can be no true and passionate affection, without these ruptures, and farewells, and despairs? I would never marry, unless my lover had first proved the strength of his affection by just such extravagant paroxysms. Depend upon it, he will again throw himself at your feet. But who is he? What mystery does he allude to?"

"You know as much as I do, aunt."

"Then we must both know more, before I shall consent to a reconciliation."

"I fear the rupture is past healing, aunt. But he has done me injustice. He gave me no opportunity to explain my apparent inconstancy. Ah—here is his number, beneath his name—done in pencil mark—an after thought!"

"He believes you will write him."

"Possibly. But I will not. No, aunt; he has been precipitate. I know his conduct may be attributed to the ardor of his affection—but still I cannot submit to act the humiliating part of a petitioner, and plead my own justification."

"Spoken like a Blount, and a Winkle! Will he be at the great party?"

"I do not know. But I think it probable."

"I hope so. We will meet him there. You must be firm and independent."

"I fear I shall be too dull to go, aunt. And I am sure, from what the doctor said, it will not be prudent for you to be there."

"Dr. McGab is sometimes mistaken, though he does understand my constitution better than I do myself. We must go. At least you must. Ah! I am sinking again. Why, why did the doctor have the cruelty to say such dreadful things!"

Lucy led her aunt to her couch, and administered another anodyne, according to the physician's directions.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LORD AND LADY AT THE GRAND PARTY—A CHALLENGE—THE BLUE CARRIAGE—THE DUEL.

It was the grand night of the season, and Mrs. Laurel was in her glory. Her fine mansion was overflowing with the fashion, and aristocracy, and wealth, and talents of the city. Dancing, singing, laughing, scandal, and all the train of enjoyments possible on such an occasion, characterized the entertainment.

Miss Flora Blount was confined to her couch, with just sufficient strength to turn over the leaves of the last American novel, which had been recommended by Pollen. The poet had the honor of conducting Lucy to Mrs. Laurel's, in obedience to the peremptory command of Flora, who would not listen to Lucy's reasons for desiring to stay at home. Miss Wilsome Winkle had signified her intention of being present. But in a subsequent note she stated that a whist party had been formed in Philadelphia, to meet at her own house on the night of Mrs. Laurel's reception, and hence she could not come.

The Arum and Crudle belles were there, but not accompanied by the fluttering dandies that had surrounded them at the theatre. Not one of them had been deemed of sufficient elevation in society to be invited thither. But the girls enlisted, or rather impressed into their service, a dilapidated old

colonel, boarding at the same house. He made every objection in his power, even exhibiting the stump of the arm which had been carried away by a cannon ball, alleging the impossibility of leading two regiments into action—but to no purpose. Miss Crudle said she would be contented with the stump, and endeavor to conceal his deficiency of limb. Of course he put on his regimentals, and the girls were exceedingly proud of their military conductor, who was, however, an ill-natured and snappish specimen of his profession, and would not allow them to make any disparaging remarks on the poet and Lucy, whom he said were the finest looking persons in the saloons. But when the Babbleton misses had made the rounds of the mansion, and exhibited their jewels and the colonel's buttons to every body, they contrived to engage the attention of Roland, who, most singularly, did not now seem to desire to approach Lucy, or to annoy her with his attentions. On the contrary, he listened with pleasure to the detracting observations of Miss Arum, on Lucy's dress, her carriage, her complexion, and her very equivocal intimacy with Lowe, who was again supposed to be a forger, or something of the sort. And he not only participated in the laughter at the expense of their village neighbor, as he called Lucy, but added many items of deteriorating scandal himself, which, being comprehended by the quick ear of Col. Ball, that gentleman immediately abandoned his gossiping companions. He then sought for Pollen. He found him just when Lucy was taken possession of by Mrs. Laurel, who was to introduce her to her particular female friends, and first among them was the countess, whose appearance was every moment expected.

"I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with you," said the colonel to the poet, "but hope I shall enjoy the happiness of being your friend."

"My name is Pollen——"

"The poet! Oh, I know you very well."

"You were once my commander, Colonel Ball. I was a cadet——"

"True, true! I am happy to meet with you on this occasion, and I am glad you have won distinction. Perhaps, after all, the pen is as well as the sword—but yet the sword is indispensable. We are both poorly paid—but no matter. We can have the satisfaction of chastising our enemies. Eh, Pollen?"

"They do say my criticisms are written with a stiletto. I do not wonder at it. They have enraged me by their injustice, and when I have an opportunity, I cannot restrain my arm. If they will goad the porcupine, let them beware of his quills!"

"Well said, Pollen. And now, do you know that you have an enemy in this house?"

"An enemy? Say twenty. There are a score of critics and publishers present who sneer at my pretensions as an author—merely because I am an American."

"Pooh—nonsense—what difference does it make in the republic of letters, where a writer was born? Or a general? Bonaparte was a native of Corsica, a contemptible island. No, sir; I can tell you the reason why your name is not in every paper, and your books in every library."

"Then you will much oblige me."

"I will, sir. You have true merit, and relying upon that you have not conciliated the censors of American literature by cringing to them, or by purchasing their praise. It was so with Shakspeare, and Milton, and Pope, sir, with Defoe, Fielding and Smollett. None of them were sufficiently reverenced while they lived. Their thrifty neighbors, the tradesmen, who made fortunes by their cunning mastery, or by dishonest practices, looked upon those great immortals with indifference or contempt, and some of them suffered for bread and raiment, sir. But they were fools, sir, for neglecting their own interests, while providing instruction and entertainment for future generations, who have not the power of throwing them a crust. And I am a fool, sir, for following their example and yours. If I had spent my forenoons in Washington, and danced attendance on the secretary, and loved all the dogs who were the President's cellar, I might have been a general, sir. But I would see them —— first, sir! but I am getting warm, and those rooms are too much crowded. Step aside with me," he continued in a lower voice. And, when they gained a recess between two colossal busts that had been imported from Greece, he said, "I feel you have been insulted to-night, and you must shoot the rascal."

"Oh, that is nothing. Some one condemning my writings. I would rather be abused than entirely neglected."

"No, sir: I don't mean that. Do you know yonder red-faced man entertaining the Babbleton girls?"

"Roland? Yes, I know him."

"Roland—yes, they said that was his name, but I did not recognize the introduction. He has slandered the beautiful creature who was hanging on your arm."

"Miss Winkle?"

"It must have been Miss Winkle. I never saw her before, but I knew her mother. She was a belle, and this lady reminded me of her. Well, sir, those Babbleton dunces and Mr. Roland are making very disparaging comments on her appearance and conduct. The females can say what they like with impunity, but the male must be called to an account. I will see him in your behalf. I will be your friend, and we will settle the matter early in the morning over in Jersey."

"Colonel, I do not wish to engage in any such——"

"Pooh! Nonsense! But here is Mrs. Laurel calling for you. Go with her, and leave the rest to me."

"But, Colonel Ball—be sure and let me see you first."

"You shall—you shall," cried the colonel, vanishing in the crowd.

"Come, sir", said Mrs. Laurel, "you are my prisoner, until I resign you to the countess, who is at the other end of the saloon. Mr. Laurei is limping about with Lucy on his arm, and will introduce the earl when he shows himself. Did you smell the gas in the hall? I know you did. My new man turned the gas into the house, and the heat up the chimney! Mr. Pollen, no one ever had such trials and troubles as myself with servants. And it does no good to discharge them and employ others. They are all alike, and get spoiled directly. But here we are. There's her ladyship. How fat and and fair she is. As soon as that party retires I will introduce you. Afterwards you must keep near enough to converse with her when she turns her face towards you. And you need not be particularly nice in your words. She is merely a well-bred woman, like millions of your countrywomen. She is perfectly enchanted with Lucy Winkle, and says she is the most beautiful creature she ever beheld."

Upon being introduced to the countess, Pollen was charmed to learn that she had read some of his productions in her own country, and that they were attracting attention—quite

as much, and quite as deservedly, she intimated, as the writings of contemporary British poets.

It was a great triumph for Pollen to be so complimented by the lioness of the evening, and to be detained at her side while so many parties of ladies and gentlemen were advancing to be presented, and retiring to make room for others. Among the rest who merely received a bow, a smile and a monosyllable from her ladyship, were the Babbleton [illegible] who were led forward by Roland. They were amazed at the undisguised partiality exhibited by her ladyship for the conversation of Pollen.

Passing on, Miss Arum drew the attention of Miss Crudle and of Roland to the fact, that Mr. Laurel had taken Lucy Winkle under his protection, and seemed to be introducing all the young gentlemen who fell in his way.

"He is deceived," said Miss Arum.

"And he'll soon find out his mistake," said Miss Crudle.

"That he shall!" rejoined the other. "I will tell Mrs. Laurel, myself, of the suspicious transactions between her and Mr. Lowe. I wonder he ain't here too."

"I see him!" said Roland, who was tall as well as large and could overlook the company. "He is coming this way and seems to be surrounded by many acquaintances. Suppose we withdraw to the other end of the room."

"Oh, no!" said Miss Arum. "I want to see how Lucy Winkle can have the audacity to hold up her head before him in such a place as this."

"And I want to see how he will look when he meets her," said Miss Crudle. "And I am sure Mrs. Laurel must have been imposed on, or she never would have invited him."

"Oh, as for that, he might do well enough for genteel company, if he did not devote all his time and attention to that proud piece of poverty."

"If you *will* remain, ladies," said Roland, "you must excuse me. I must seek the cold air on the balcony to cure a slight headache, but we will meet again. And yonder comes the colonel. I do not like his looks, and will avoid him. He will stand by you, if you seize his arm until I return."

Roland disappeared on the left, and the colonel emerged from the crowd on the right, and was instantly seized by the young ladies.

"Pinioned, eh?" said he. "Well, I must submit."

"Fie, colonel," said Miss Arum, "of course you must submit, and you ought to do so with a better grace."

"I do believe he was frowning," said Miss Crudle. "But I will make him smile. Yonder comes the gentleman, colonel," she continued, "who carried Miss Winkle's heart by storm. It does not appear, however, that there was a very desperate resistance."

"Few could resist his approaches. I wish he would approach us, and test the experiment. You know him?"

"Know him! certainly. Mr. Lowe has been a resident of Babbleton for many months; and with the exception of his conduct to Lucy Winkle——"

"What the deuce is all this about? I cannot understand a word of it. Mr. Lowe—and residing at Babbleton—and conduct so. Do you mean that gentleman accosting Mr. Laurel? Come nearer that you may see more distinctly."

"Certainly," said the girls. "That is Mr Lowe——"

"No such thing!" cried the colonel.

"My lord," said Mr. Laurel, "this is Miss Winkle. Lucy, this is the Earl of Hilton."

Lucy, pale, but collected—for she had recently suspected such would be the denouement, and had resolved to manifest no extraordinary emotion—bowed, without averting her eyes, and yet without seeking a recognition. His lordship, quite as pale as herself, and with traces of recent grief upon his face, lingered a moment at her side, and whispered something in her ear, while the unconscious crowd gazed in admiration. He then joined his mother, who beckoned him away for the purpose of introducing the poet.

"I'm trembling all over, Susan!" said Miss Arum.

"I'm petrified, Bell!" said Miss Crudle.

"The deuce you are!" said the colonel. "I thought you were both better soldiers. What! not stand the fire of a lord's eyes, when you have been browbeating a colonel, who, perhaps, killed a dozen noblemen in the last war?"

"Who even dreamt such a thing possible!" said Bell.

"What's that you call him?" asked the colonel. "He is as fine a looking fellow as your husband will be."

"I am amazed!" said Susan.

"It is a wonder you are not stricken dumb," said the colonel. "But yonder is my man," he continued, seeing Roland enter from the balcony. "Sit on this sofa, ladies,

and excuse me; I have a matter of the first importance to communicate to a certain person on the other side of the room." And he hurried across.

"And he's a lord!" exclaimed Miss Arum

"The Earl of Hilton!" said Miss Cradle.

"And has been living all this time in Babbleton, and we not to know, or to suspect who he was!"

"And to be suspected of being a pickpocket, a counterfeiter, a forger!"

"An adventurer, that we thought had deceived Lucy Winkle!"

"Deceitful wretch! She has deceived us all! No doubt she knew all about him!"

"Mr. Roland didn't know he was a lord any more than the rest of us," said Miss Arum.

"No, he did not—and he thought Lucy's conduct very disgraceful. Yonder he is. Let us go to him, and tell him what a ridiculous mistake we have made."

As they moved away, they turned their eyes aside and discovered the earl, who had escaped from his mother, standing beside Lucy in a dark recess; and they had doubtless been involuntary listeners.

"I have been bewildered, Lucy—perhaps deluded by the creations of my own imagination," said Lord Hilton. "Oh assure me it has been so! Lift me from my miserable abyss and I shall be truly happy!"

"My lord, I know not what to say. I have not sought to plunge you into an abyss of misery. I have not censured your conduct; and mine, I am sure, has not merited your condemnation. If it has, however, appeared to be inexplicable, it is because you did not seek to comprehend it, and it did not become me to solicit your attention for the purpose of imposing upon your patience any tedious and unnecessary explanations."

"Tedious and unnecessary explanations! Oh, Lucy, do not term them so! You would not, I am sure, if you knew what a cloud of woe a few words of thine would dispel from my tortured existence."

"No! I cannot submit to assume the abasing attitude of a humble petitioner to be heard in my own justification. Words could be of no avail, if my truth were doubted. Strong in the consciousness of my own innocence, however much the

wicked devices of another may have caused my conduct to appear capricious, or inconsistent, I am content to abide the result, with a firm reliance upon the protecting hand of my Maker. I——"

"The countess, my mother, approaches. It was the wicked device of Roland! It must have been so. I will believe it. Oh, to-morrow, Lucy, let me——"

"Edmund! Ah, Miss Winkle! Mr. Pollen informs me you have long known each other. Perhaps Lord Hilton, if his abode in this country were prolonged, might be in danger of becoming Americanized."

"I would not unwittingly imperil his safety, madam," said Lucy. "And if I may judge from the sentiments I have heard him repeatedly express, I doubt whether a longer sojourn among us would induce him to relinquish the franchises of his native land."

"She speaks truly, madam. The force of education, and old associations, may not easily be overcome by the temptations of a new country, however attractive they may be."

"Still, it does appear to me that there are dangerous attractions here. Yet your old associations must be peculiarly strong. Miss Winkle cannot be aware of the precise nature of the inducement which tempts you to return to your own country at this juncture; and which alone could have induced me to cross the stormy ocean to hasten your departure, and accompany you back."

"I cannot be aware of the particular object of a sudden departure, madam," said Lucy; "but I may readily perceive why one of his possessions and prospects, would naturally be impatient to realize the advantages of the position which awaits him."

"Oh, that no doubt is very correct in meaning; but the 'possessions and prospects,' in his particular case, I may say, since I understand an honorable friendship has subsisted between you, depend, perhaps, to a very considerable extent, upon the celerity of his movements, and upon the condition of his immediate appearance in England."

"I hope, my dear mother," said his lordship, with something resembling vexation, "that my immediate return cannot be so urgently demanded as your words would seem to imply."

"I am very sure," said Lucy, with decided emphasis, "that

neither my countrymen, nor countrywomen would desire to interpose any obstacles which might delay his lordship's return to his native land; and particularly, if a longer absence from his country might produce loss of fortune, or involve sacrifices of any other nature."

At that moment Pollen appeared at Lucy's side, and taking his arm, she was hidden from the view of Lord Hilton by the parties continually surrounding the noble guest. As the poet strode along muttering his thoughts as usual, for the flatteries of the countess had lifted him into the world of reverie, he came in contact with Roland, who paused suddenly before him, but with his face the other way. Roland was confronted by Colonel Ball, and Lucy could not avoid listening to what passed between them.

"Mr. Roland," said the colonel, "will you furnish me with your address?"

"With great pleasure," replied Roland, presenting his card.

"I presume," continued the colonel, "you can have no difficulty in conjecturing my object in soliciting your address."

"To be frank with you," said Roland, "I am at a loss to know the nature of your business, unless you want to borrow money. I have a sum in this city just now unemployed, and may be able to accommodate you."

The colonel was silent for several moments. If they had been in the street, no doubt, in the first fermentation of his wrath, he would have aimed a blow at the rich civilian. But, while he paused he reflected. The random shot had not missed the mark. The colonel was a borrower. His salary did not suffice for his expenses, and he was always in debt. So, suppressing any remnant of his first indignation, he resolved, after the duel, if Roland behaved well in the field, to cultivate his acquaintance.

"No—that is not it," he replied. "It is quite a different matter. I am the friend of Mr. Pollen."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Roland. "I am likewise the poet's friend."

"But you have insulted him—and he demands satisfaction, to-morrow morning, at Hoboken."

"Insulted him! No, colonel—there is some mistake in the matter."

"Mistake? Pooh! Suppose there should be? Why, it

can be explained on the field. Mistake or no mistake, there can be no explanation after the challenge, but with pistol in hand. You will be there, of course, accompanied by your friend."

Roland did not assent. But the colonel did not observe the negative shake of his head, or stay to hear his objections. Roland, being just then met by the Babbleton belles, diverged from the direction he had been pursuing, when Pollen and Lucy were confronted by the colonel.

"Well met, well met?" said the colonel to the poet, whose eye was in a 'frenzy rolling,' and who had not comprehended the matter at all. "All is arranged. A deal of trouble will be saved. Remember, at Hoboken, before sunrise. I will take my case of pistols. Adieu till then."

"Mr. Pollen!" said Lucy, when the colonel had disappeared.

"Ay—I shall go to London. The countess has promised to defray the expense."

"But this duel, Mr. Pollen. Surely you will not fight?"

"The English are generous in their patronage of authors. The countess enumerated—but I have forgotten how many—those who have pensions——"

"But why did you challenge Mr. Roland? Oh, beware of him!"

"They may let loose the reins of fancy—and dwell in an empyreal atmosphere, without racking their brains in devising the ways and means of discharging a bootmaker's bill."

"But, Mr. Pollen!" continued Lucy, shaking his arm.

"Who patronizes authors here? Who pays them pensions? Not even the rich publishers! One of mine refused to speak to me one day because my coat was rent, and he had consumed the profits of my book. But I will abandon the country! I will go! I will!" And releasing himself, he abandoned his fair charge, and rushed out of the house.

Poor Lucy retreated to the friendly recess which had before sheltered her from the many oppressive glances of the guests, who, however, only gazed in admiration. Here she sat alone, a prey to many painful emotions. The poet had been attacked by one of his fits, and Lowe—or rather the earl—had disappeared. Roland was near, and she was now quite unattended! Nor was this all—for upon looking round, she

discovered the Arum and Crudle belles seated within a few paces of her, and Roland conversing with them. They were moreover looking at her, and their whispers could [illegible] be heard. "Patience on a monument," and the [illegible] were jeeringly uttered, while Roland, with his face [illegible] seemed to enjoy the scene.

Mr. Henry Milnor, who had watched every movement and expression of Lucy during the evening, but had [illegible] approach, now joined her, seeing she was entirely [illegible]. And this caused a sensation in the breasts of the Misses Arum and Crudle. Henry had been introduced to them at an early [illegible] by the colonel, whose real object was to be relieved of the [illegible] of conducting them home; and they, upon seeing him approach, supposed of course themselves to be the object of attraction. But their disappointment was apparent in the vexed expression of their lips, when he bowed slightly, and passed on to where Lucy was sitting.

"Miss Winkle," said he, manifesting his lively [illegible] taking possession of a seat at her side, "I am happy [illegible] opportunity of inquiring if it be true that Lord H[illegible] has been residing for months in your village?"

"It is true. But he was known only as Mr. E[illegible] Lowe."

"Mr. Laurel says his name his Edward Lowe Dale. You were acquainted with him?"

"Oh yes."

"His manners are fine. He must have been an agreeable acquaintance."

"He was, indeed," said Lucy, in a slightly agitated voice which Milnor perceived, but did not suspect the cause of it.

"The countess, I learn from the British Secretary of the [illegible] Mr. [illegible], with the light hair and [illegible] [illegible] you by Mr. Laurel—has arranged [illegible] England."

"I [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] England [illegible]

[illegible] skill, [illegible] [illegible] she has chosen [illegible] the [illegible] in the kingdom."

"Did you [illegible] her name? But why need I ask? I could

never have heard it—I, a commoner, as they call those who inherit no title."

"But you have heard it, or at least read it in the list of the queen's noble ladies of honor. It is Lady Stuart. And they say she has royal blood in her veins. I learn that the late Earl of Hilton, the present earl's brother, left the estates somewhat encumbered, and this marriage is to repair the damaged fortunes of the house. You seem to be ill, Miss Winkle. Can I be of any service? Shall I seek Mr. Pollen for you?"

"I thank you. But it would be useless to seek him. He is in one of his reveries, and is in all probability standing in the midst of the square in front of the house, gazing at the stars, and uttering poetical incantations. I will thank you, however, Mr. Milnor, to accompany me home. I am not well, and would return to my aunt."

"With the greatest pleasure," said Henry; "but as I might not be able to find your carriage, with your permission I will use my mother's. She will remain at least an hour yet."

Lucy, without hesitation, accompanied Milnor into the room, where the voluble hostess was expatiating on the trials and troubles of American housekeepers, and dwelling particularly on the item of domestics. Roland, seeing the colonel again approaching from another direction, and not desiring to lose sight of Lucy, endeavored to keep in view of her, but found it impracticable to do so, when she had taken her leave of the countess and Mrs. Laurel, and passed into the cloaking room. But, having heard her express a desire to depart immediately, and not doubting she would fall into the trap he had prepared, he hastened into the street, and walked briskly in the direction of Miss Flora's mansion.

Lord Hilton had likewise kept Lucy in view, himself unseen. And he had also comprehended the intentions of Roland, and prepared a counter plot for him. Two of the countess's most intelligent servants, the coachman and footman, were his confederates. One of them was dressed as much like Milnor as possible, and the other put on female apparel, of the color and in imitation of Lucy's dress. This couple, when Lucy entered the cloaking room, and after Roland had stepped into the street, and signalled his man of the approach of the party, were directed to descend the marble

steps. When Miss Blount's carriage was called for, Roland's blue one drove up to the curb with open door, and the disguised couple stepped into it. Immediately the sound of the whip was heard, and the wheels were in rapid motion.

The sleepy driver of Flora's carriage had just been made acquainted with the fact that he had been called, when Milnor and Lucy appeared. But cursing his unlucky stars, he drove off furiously, and was overturned by coming in collision with an omnibus before proceeding a hundred paces.

Mr. Milnor had no difficulty in finding his mother's carriage, in which he placed his charge, and they were driven away slowly and carefully.

Meantime the blue carriage progressed most gloriously, and when it overtook and passed Roland, who was pursuing the same direction, the driver signified that all was well.

Arrived in front of the Blount mansion, Roland's driver descended and threw open the door. But instead of stepping out, the couple inside, in pursuance of their preconcerted agreement, only snored aloud, and remained perfectly still.

"Wake up, in there, if you please," said the driver.

A double snore was the answer.

"Hallo! I say! Somebody must 'ave put opium in their wine!" said the driver. "Come," he continued, thrusting in his hand and shaking one of his passengers—"this ain't the blue chamber in the Red Anchor! Wake up and go to bed, I say."

"Go about your business," said the inside coachman, "or I'll tickle your hears."

"Tickle my hears—and in that strange voice! Come, captain, you'll have to interpret that for me. I can't understand it, no how."

"I'll hindeavor to do hit," said the countess's coachman descending—the footman in female apparel still remaining inside.

"Hindeavor to do hit! What's that? Does it mean to [illegible]?"

"[illegible]," said the other, and at the same time dealing a blow upon the nose of Roland's man, which laid him on his back. The victor then, in obedience to his instructions immediately detached the horses from the carriage, and fastened them to a tree that stood opposite the house.

"Now I'll have my fare," said Roland's man, recovering

and regaining his feet, "if you *are* a poet." He aimed a blow at his antagonist, as he approached him, which was easily parried, for the countess's men were both regular bruisers, having learned the "noble art of self-defence," under the most approved instructors at home. Again Roland's man was knocked down; and the punishment was repeated as often as he gained his feet, until Roland himself appeared on the field of action.

"What does this mean!" demanded he. "Paddy, where is the lady?"

"In the carriage, sir. But I'll never drive her home again if she has a poet with her—no, not for twenty dollars. I'm whipped, sir. I acknowledge the corn. And I hope you are satisfied, Mr. Poet."

"Is she in the carriage?" asked Roland, approaching the door, where he could see the outline of the supposed lady. Then ordering his man to get the horses again and drive to the Red Anchor, he bounded in, but was prevented from closing the door by the victor outside, who forcibly held it open.

"My adorable Lucy," said he, "you see that fate has decreed you mine."

At one bound the pretended woman sprang out. Roland followed quickly. He seized his prize — but with a well-aimed blow the disguised footman laid him in the gutter under the carriage.

"Fury! Who did that?" exclaimed Roland, scrambling up, and again approaching the supposed Lucy, who stood with his face averted—but turned when the pursuer placed his hand on him, and again prostrated the iniquitous plotter.

"Fury! They are men!" cried Roland, rising once more while the blood gushed from his nose. "Drive away as soon as possible, Paddy," he continued, removing away himself with all the expedition in his power, and followed by the British bruisers, who laughed heartily at his expense.

By the time Paddy had replaced the horses and cracked his whip, Mr. Milnor and Lucy arrived. They descended at the door without uttering a word, and when Lucy entered the mansion, Milnor bowed in silence to her low "good night," and despondingly re entered the coach. During the passage from the Laurel mansion, the young man had made a formal tender of his heart and hand; and although they had been

respectfully, but firmly declined, yet he felt that the first had been surrendered for ever, and could never be reclaimed. Hence he was truly disheartened.

It seemed that wherever Lucy appeared, she was destined to lead captive the hearts of others, without designing it, and without being conscious of the mischief her beauty wrought; and this was another source of unhappiness, for she would rather have willingly inflicted pain upon others, however much they might distress her by a hopeless pursuit of the love which could be possessed only by the one who had long since won her young and confiding heart.

The next morning at early dawn, Colonel Ball was standing on the margin of the river, at Hoboken, with a pistol-case in his hand, and impatiently awaiting the arrival of his principal, as well that of the opposing party. An invisible reporter of the *Herald*, who had mysteriously obtained an intimation of the nature of the enterprise in contemplation, watched the motions of the colonel, and, like him, awaited the arrival upon the ground of the remainder of the dramatis personæ.

The colonel whistled, and stamped to keep himself warm, for it was a bright frosty morning. He then measured the ground with a most scrupulous impartiality, and tried both positions himself, his fancy supplying the supposed antagonist.

"Why the deuce don't they come?" he exclaimed petulantly, after making a careful reconnoissance of the approaches, which resulted unsatisfactorily. He then placed the case on the ground, and beat his hand against his side to keep it warm.

"Will there be a duel this morning?" asked the shivering reporter, unable any longer to stand his ground behind the tree.

"Where the deuce did you come from?" asked the colonel, staring in utter astonishment at the thickly-enveloped reporter, who was a corpulent Englishman, and professed to be familiar with the duello.

"From behind that tree, where I have been freezing this half hour, and could endure it no longer."

"And why were you standing there?"

"To witness the duel."

"You like the sport?"

"Very much. I have witnessed twenty in England, and reported them all."

"Reported them? Are you a reporter?"

"Yes, colonel, and I will do you justice. You may read my account before it goes to press."

"And you know who I am?"

"Colonel Ball. You shot Mr. M——"

"A mistake, sir. He shot me; and a d—— bad shot it was, to aim at my body and strike my leg. But it seems we are not to be entertained this morning. I fear the parties are not men of honor."

"Cowards, perhaps."

"Ay, the same thing. A man of honor cannot be a coward—a coward cannot be a man of honor—eh?"

"I agree with you, colonel."

"You are, no doubt, a man of honor?"

"I hope so, colonel."

"We'll see. Both my man and the other principal are poltroons; they will not be present. But I must smell gunpowder, and you must fight me," added the colonel, taking up the brace of pistols.

"I fight you, colonel?"

"Yes, certainly. You will not require me to insult you. I never do that without very strong provocation. We'll dispense with it, and just have a delightful exchange of shots, and then return together to the city, on the most friendly terms imaginable. I take it for granted you will not report the occurrence."

"Ha, ha, ha! you are facetious, colonel."

"No, upon my honor! We shall have an exchange of shots, if I am a man of veracity. There, take your choice," continued the colonel, advancing with the pistols, the muzzles towards himself.

"You must excuse me, colonel," said the reporter, retreating to the tree. "I will not exchange shots with you."

"You shall, by Jupiter! Here, I place this pistol on the ground at the root of the tree, and will step off ten paces. At the word 'fire,' either party is at liberty to pull trigger."

"I will not take it, Colonel Ball. I will not exchange shots with you. We have no quarrel."

"Oh, are you waiting for that? I thought an insult might be dispensed with between gentlemen. Well, you are a coward. Now, if you will not fire, according to your own admission, you cannot be a man of honor."

"I will not exchange shots with you."

"Nonsense! You must have something to report. Take up the pistol, and be ready. At the word I shall fire. One—two—three—Fire!" But the colonel did not fire. The reporter vanished behind the tree, and there was no mark to shoot at.

The colonel walked round at a quick step. The reporter peeped from behind, without exposing his head, and barely far enough to see the colonel's heel, as it was lifted up in the pursuit. Round and round they continued to go, the distance never diminishing between them; but as the colonel's round was much the greatest in circumference, it might be supposed he was the most violently exercised. It was not so, however. For the roots of the great tree ran out in all directions, and it required a considerable degree of activity to pass them without stumbling, and such an accident might have been attended with unpleasant consequences. Besides, as it has been intimated, the reporter was quite fat and large, and it was requisite to use every precaution to keep his body covered by the trunk of the tree, for the colonel was a famous shot. The reporter therefore was compelled to maintain nearly a horizontal position, with his eye upon the colonel's heel, and his face out of the pistol's range; and his motion was required to be regular and incessant, so as not to leave his rear uncovered.

They continued to wind round the tree in this manner until the sun had risen. Neither of them now were conscious of the frosty atmosphere. The reporter panted, and his smoking breath was expelled in great clouds. The colonel turned red in the temples and behind the ears. Evidently the contest was approaching a termination, although no blood had yet been spilled. At length a small part of the reporter's coat tail, which the colonel had hitherto seen but once or twice, became steadily visible, and seemed to grow larger. The colonel fired, and a button fell. He then paused and placing the pistol under the stump of his amputated arm, very coolly began to recharge it.

"Now I have you," cried the reporter, seizing the other pistol, which stood by near the root of the tree, and advancing a pace or two towards his antagonist. "It is my turn now to be cautious, levelling the weapon, and aiming at the colonel's breast.

"Fire away!" said the colonel. "The next shot is yours.

by all the rules. But if you hit the mark, be sure and report it correctly. Remember that. And be quick about it, or I shall soon be ready for another chance."

The reporter, seeing that the colonel was ramming down another bullet, and believing the matter, if carried any further, might not result without injury, fired his pistol in the air, and advanced with his hand extended, which the colonel could not avoid receiving.

"Very well!" said the colonel; "I cannot decline your hand after sparing my life. We will return and drink a bottle together. But be sure and show me your notes before you go to press."

The reporter repeated the assurance that he would do so, and also pledged himself never again to volunteer his services on a similar occasion.

After a hearty breakfast with the reporter, at one of the restaurants, the colonel sought his principal at the office of the ——, where he was known to have been employed in the capacity of an assistant editor. He was not at the office; but the chief editor was there, and with whom the colonel was very well acquainted.

"I am here to see Mr. Pollen," said the colonel.

"I am sorry he is not in, colonel," said the editor.

"So am I. But perhaps you will indorse him."

"I suppose so. I see whatever he writes before it is printed, and I must be responsible for it."

"I don't mean that!" said the colonel.

"Oh, I think I know what you mean. His debts! I pay him a salary, which he disburses as he pleases, and I cannot assume his liabilities."

"I don't mean that, either," said the colonel. "I was his friend, and arranged a hostile meeting for him. He was not present at the time and place appointed, and he must answer it!"

"Is it possible? Why Pollen, surely, never challenged any one to mortal combat! I am astonished to hear you say so, colonel. But if he did—that is, if there has been no misunderstanding on your part—rely upon it, he is innocent of any intention to practise the deception you complain of. You may be assured the whole matter escaped his memory; and ten to one, if he were to-day to meet the person who insulted him, he would not recollect it; unless, indeed, the offence was

a stricture on his literary merits, and then he would neither forget nor forgive him."

"No: it was some disparagement of a young lady he attended at Mrs. Laurel's party."

"Ha, ha, ha! Pollen fighting about a young lady! The whole thing is a misconstruction, colonel. Pollen never takes any interest in the ladies. I suppose he would not permit any one under his charge to be insulted, but he would not seriously challenge a man to mortal combat for words lightly spoken. Come with me. We will find him, and hear what he has to say in relation to the matter. Ten to one he has forgotten all about it," and such truly, was the case.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ROMANTIC RECONCILIATION OF THE LOVERS.

Although Lucy was sensible of a painful dejection following the events in the saloons of Mrs. Laurel, yet her forebodings were not unmixed with a melancholy pleasure, when she remembered the pleading looks and eloquent words of her lover. Filial duty, interest, even a prior engagement, might separate them in future, but there could be no doubt he truly loved her—that no one else could ever inspire a more ardent affection in his breast than she had done. He might go beyond the broad ocean, never to return, he might glitter as an ornament in the lofty circles of the aristocracy, to which he belonged, and he might have in his train the high-born Lady Stuart, and be the lord of her wast possessions; yet, something within assured Lucy he could never forget her—he could never cease to dwell upon her memory with sad regret.

And, however singular it may appear to the uninitiated, yet such reflections, even when the object which inspires them is lost beyond the hope of recovery, are fraught with soothing consolations, more potent in enabling the sex to bear the most dreadful of all deprivations, than any other equivalents the world can offer. It is the conviction that they have been appreciated, though not possessed; the knowledge that

their loss will be lamented, after they have been cast away. Such is woman!

Lucy never slept more sweetly, nor dreamt more delightfully, than on the night she returned from the Laurel mansion. And the next morning she arose quite refreshed, with cheeks nearly as roseate as usual, and with spirits no longer desponding; for she knew that if it was the decree of fortune she should be separated from her exalted lover—but whom she was proud to have loved as the untitled Mr. Lowe—the pang of parting must be reciprocal.

"I hope you are better this morning, dear aunt," said Lucy, the next day, when she entered Miss Flora's chamber.

"A great deal. The doctor understands my system, and his remedies never fail. You must send for Dr. McGab—— but, really, Lucy!" continued her aunt, gazing at her niece, "you look as well as ever you did."

"I am quite well this morning, aunt."

"I was fearful the excitement last night would unstring your nerves. They must be better than mine. You are stronger than I was at your age. But tell me the news. Was Roland there?"

"He was."

"How did Pollen conduct himself?"

"He is now the favorite of the countess, and you must not expect him longer to dance attendance here."

"I am sure it was only pity for his distresses that I felt for him. If there is to be no more distress, there need be no more pity. But instead of using the money I gave him in the way he promised, I learn from his tailor he paid it to him, and the bill is not yet quite settled in full. I will pay it, however. How did the countess look?"

"Fresh and blooming as yourself, dear aunt."

"As myself! But they say there is really some resemblance between us. And the earl?"

"You mean Mr. Lowe?"

"No—the Lord Hilton."

"You know him very well; the earl was Mr. Lowe. You have often entertained his lordship under your roof."

"Lucy! is that so?" exclaimed Flora, with much animation.

"It is, indeed, aunt; and for several days I had suspected as much."

"What a romance! I am quite well now, Lucy! He spoke to you, of course?"

"Of course, aunt, and begged me to forgive him"

"And you did?"

"I did not! That is, I expressed myself precisely as I should have done to Mr. Lowe."

"Brave girl! But I hope the difference is not irreconcilable. Yet you did well. A too easy yielding often ruins a girl's power over the sterner sex. The gratification of repulsing a lord, must be nearly as great as marrying one! The greatest triumph I ever enjoyed, was the rejection of ——, who, you know, became an ambassador. But I knew he merely wanted my little fortune. Lord Hilton! And he won your little heart as the simple Mr. Lowe!"

"I fancy, aunt," replied Lucy, "he lost quite as much as he won!"

"Oh, it is a game at which two can play! Such a romance! I had a presentiment of something of the sort, when I received your letter from Babbleton. I am perfectly w... Lucy. Some one rings. How late it is. I will be down in a few minutes. Who is it?" she continued, to the servant. "A note? For you, Lucy. Read it."

It was from Lord Hilton, urgently begging a brief interview on a matter of the utmost importance. But the signature was "Edmund"

"I think I would deny him, Lucy," said Miss Flora. "It will increase his eagerness. Never fear but he will persist until he accomplishes his purpose. I know the men." And yet she never secured one herself, with all her knowledge. Whether or not that fact had any influence in the decision of Lucy, she told the servant to say she would attend the gentleman.

A few minutes after, Lucy entered the parlor. She was struck with the mournful expression of Lord Hilton's countenance, and immediately changed her purpose of maintaining a cold and resentful demeanor.

"Lucy," said he, taking her unresisting hand, and leading her to a seat, "I beg you will hear me patiently before you reply. It is my duty to ask forgiveness, and to utter explanations. All I crave is to be heard, and to be judged according to the dictates of your heart."

"Go on, sir, if you please. But there is nothing to forgive. I have not censured you."

"But *I* was not so forbearing. It was my duty to ascertain, beyond the possibility of doubt, and by other means than those at first adopted, if there were any just grounds for the suspicion—and it pains me to repeat it—that I was made the victim of a duplicity, a capricious deception—so inconsistent with your nature—so different from all the former actions of your life——"

"You will oblige me," said Lucy, "by putting a period to these self-reproaches."

"They are merited; for my obtuseness and stupidity were unparalleled. I should have known, after the vile attempt of Roland on that memorable night, that he was capable of any device—apt to perpetrate any scheme, to destroy the character of the one who indignantly rejected his offers; or to be insidiously revenged on the one who had defied his prowess in open day."

"Do you know it now?" asked Lucy.

"I do. And I came hither to relate the manner of the discovery." He then described the occurrence of the preceding evening, and told her he had employed similar agents to those which had been used by Roland, to watch his movements, and to obtain information from the villain's creatures.

Lucy, though surprised, betrayed no emotion. Conscious of her own rectitude, she never yielded to the apprehension that she might be seriously involved in the machinations of others.

"And now," continued his lordship, "can you forgive me?"

"Most certainly," said Lucy. "Be assured that I do not harbor a particle of resentment."

"Oh, then," cried he, seizing her hand, "I shall be the happiest of mortals!"

"I hope so, sir," said she, withdrawing her hand, and rising. "I am sure the knowledge that Lord Hilton is happy, after all the privations he endured in a foreign land, will be an agreeable reflection to his friends, who knew him in his exile; and none will rejoice more heartily than myself—for I was his sincere friend and——"

"Lucy, do not torture me thus!" said his lordship, detaining her. "Oh, believe me, when I declare that without

you, I should be the most miserable creature in the world. You say I am forgiven. Why, then, should you desire to avoid the consummation of the promise you made me? Why seek to be estranged from the one, who, enveloped in mystery, you admitted had some share in your affections—and who now declares, when the cloud of uncertainty is dispelled, that his whole heart is yours, and that his happiness in this world depends upon an indissoluble union with you. You know I was a native of a distant land, and that I never sought to become a citizen of your country. That much I resolved to disclose, that you might not upbraid me for a disingenuousness I was incapable of perpetrating."

"My lord——"

"Oh, do not address me thus!"

"Then, Edmund, be assured I am not offended. Believe that my regard for you, frankly admitted when I did not know the rank you were destined to hold, is not diminished——"

"Noble, generous Lucy!" exclaimed he, pressing her to his heart.

"Have pity, Edmund," said she, escaping from him, and resuming her chair. "Let us realize the thought, that in all probability we are doomed soon to part, probably to meet no more."

"No! no! The power does not exist which can separate us."

"Reason will resume its sway. I have learned from others—and without a resort to interrogation—that another claims you—a relation of your own, and in your own country. One who is able to repair the injury wrought on your hereditary possessions by the improvidence of the late earl——and one who has the approbation of the countess——"

"Lucy! Let me explain it. It is true my mother would have me espouse the Lady Stuart. But, even if I had never met with you, I would not comply with my mother's wishes. Our estates are contiguous, but our hearts are wide asunder. And Lady Stuart is my senior in years, and would not deny that her heart has been lavished on another. Enough of her. But I have letters from my steward, stating that the heaviest claims against my deceased brother's estate, and which I had agreed to discharge, have been ascertained to be fraudulent, and there is no obligation, legal or moral, to pay them. My clear rental will be amply sufficient for any elegance and

comfort one should desire—and particularly one who has studied so many lessons of economy in this great country—and if enough for your comfort and elegance, you alone, would suffice for my happiness."

"This is rhapsody—reality must follow. The wife of Lord Hilton should be of noble descent, or else she should not dwell in a land of hereditary titles."

"Not so. In England the wife shares the husband's station, and is elevated to his rank by law and custom. In America the lord becomes a citizen. Such is the operation of both governments. Mine is the most liberal and generous, and hence we should prefer it. You will agree with me, my adorable girl? Let your brother exult in his native Americanism. He is right. Were I not debarred by birth, I would be of his party. Nor would I deprive his country of a vote or a soldier. But politics, in your glorious Republic, cannot be made to mingle with matrimony. If your foreign husband dwelt in America, it might be different—it might seem like a proscription of the natives. But who would censure your brother if he were to wed a foreign lady? She could exercise no——"

"You are talking politics," said Lucy, smiling.

"And you have no political objections! Forgive me; but I apprehend some obstacles from your brother."

"My brother knows my utter aversion to politics," continued Lucy, "and will not be likely to attempt an interference on such grounds. But, still, there would be difficulties. My mother——"

"Shall go with us."

"She would not leave her old mansion to reside in Buckingham palace."

"Then we will come to her once every year, instead of economizing on the continent. I will come hither, and learn more and more of your institutions. And when I return to my place in the House of Lords, I will be the better able to repel the calumnies of our slanderous scribblers. For the last few centuries Great Britain has culminated above all the empires that preceded her; but she is, I think, to be succeeded and surpassed by her Transatlantic offspring. But Americans must rule America, as the British have ruled Great Britain.

"Are you not talking politics again?" asked Lucy, archly.

"Perhaps you would demonstrate the point that a British lord might, however, govern an American lady?"

"By no means!" said his lordship, taking her unresisting hand—"for a lady governs all the lords of Great Britain!"

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Miss Flora Blount, radiant with smiles.

"I have learned all about your romantic disguises," said she.

"Not all of them, aunt," said Lucy. She then related the account of the chastisement of Roland by the countess's coachman and footman.

"That was well done," said Flora, "and the punishment merited." She then launched on the ocean of romance, enumerating many instances of lords dwelling in foreign lands, under assumed names, and concluded by intimating to Lord Hilton that she should not be surprised if he were to be made one of the heroes of a novel.

His lordship admitted the possibility of such a thing, and said he ought not be astonished at it, inasmuch as the affair of the disguised footman and coachman with Roland had been faithfully chronicled. He then exhibited a morning paper containing an elaborate version of the occurrence; and while Miss Blount was striving to read it without her spectacles, and entirely unconscious of the fact, that the sheet was upside down in her hands, his lordship bowed, and withdrew with an elastic step and happy countenance.

During the day, the countess and Mrs Laurel called to inquire after the health of Miss Blount, and both were exceedingly complimentary on the improved appearance of Lucy, who had been less vivacious than usual the evening before. She did not explain the cause of the change; for from certain phrases made use of by the visitors, it might have been inferred—and which was really the case—that Lord Hilton had communicated something of a personal character to his mother.

The ladies had just risen to depart when Col Ball was announced. When the door closed after them, the colonel was to ascertain the place where he would be likely to meet the poet.

"Bless your life, colonel," said Miss Flora, "I was about to ask you the same question. Until to-day, I could always

rely upon seeing him here. But the countess has captured him, and I must relinquish my claims."

"He was not worth retaining, madam," said the colonel. He then detailed the inexcusable pusillanimity of his conduct, and gave the particulars of his wild-goose chase, as he called it, to Hoboken; and amused Lucy with his description of the encounter with the reporter.

"And it was all on *your* account, miss," added the colonel.

"I am much indebted to you, colonel."

"That's nothing. I am indebted to at least fifty. But those pranksome girls—the Babbleton heiresses at our boarding house—have been telling me that this sprig of nobility—his father was a brave man, and was killed magnificently in battle—this son of the laughing countess, has been stealing away the hearts of our American girls, and that, too, under false colors."

"Did they tell you that?"

"Something of the sort. But they have changed their tune since Roland had his drubbing, which I will tell you about another time, and they declare you are worthy of a prince."

"I am much obliged to them."

"I doubt it. They regret, I am sure, the Earl did not lay siege to their own slightly defended hearts—or that they did not ambush for his."

"That is unkind, colonel."

"No. It is the truth. But, since I was the friend of your craven protector last night, and was ready to stand in his place this morning; and since this disguised stranger turns out to be a great lord, who will no doubt desert you—hang me, if an old soldier can avail any thing, and you will accept his remaining hand——"

"Colonel Ball! What are you driving at?'

"What am I driving at? I am aiming point-blank at matrimony, rather than see such a splendid girl go unwedded. What say you to my summons?"

"I must decline—but I thank you."

"If you decline, I will not attempt a storm—or tempt one, rather; for if you were to comply, I should be the prisoner. Well, I have discharged my duty, both here and in the field. Farewell." And before the ladies had time to perceive that the old warrior was quite serious in his proposition, he had

vanished. But, nevertheless, their laughter could not be restrained.

The Blount mansion now became a very fashionable resort. The old walls, ceilings, fireplaces, and furniture were to be viewed without a depreciating comment, after it was ascertained that the earl and the countess were frequent visitors, and that Mrs. Laurel had substituted wax candles in her parlors for jets of gas.

Roland had left the city in discomfiture and disgrace, and his blue carriage no longer impudently waited to entrap its victims. Even Bell Arum and Susan Crudle, wrote penitent notes to Lucy Winkle, protesting that they had been misled and deceived by the wicked misrepresentations of Roland, and beseeching their old schoolmate and neighbor to forgive them. Lucy did so without hesitation, and invited them to her splendid mansion. It was a most unaccountable thing to Lucy that they had escaped the evil devices of Roland, or rather that he formed no designs against them. But they had not entertained any apprehensions; and if he had proposed matrimony, they were both in readiness to accept him.

Admitted to the Blount mansion, Bell and Susan immediately cut the acquaintance of their boarding-house associates. The music teacher, the dry goods clerk, and the horticulturist were dismissed. Henceforth their company was to be comprised of the real aristocracy. And by some means which was never explained, George Parke had obtained an intimation that his presence in the city would be agreeable to certain young ladies at No. —, —— square; and as it was vacation he repaired thither, and became an occasional attendant at the various places of amusement. Poor fellow! He too had intended to propose to Lucy, when informed by Miss Crudle that she was already engaged. But as he really admired her he found some satisfaction in occasionally gaining access to her presence in company with the belles, for whom he found it impossible to entertain any other than feelings of friendly interest. From New York he ultimately wandered over to Philadelphia, where he became seriously fascinated with Jane Nutt.

Lord Hilton having resisted the entreaties of his mother to accompany Lady Stuart, their departure from the United States was indefinitely postponed. They were the objects of so many flattering attentions on the part of the republican

aristocracy of the great metropolis, that they were induced to pass the winter among them.

About this time all Babbleton was in a state of excessive agitation. Bell and Sue were writing home lengthy letters every day. Lucy Winkle was to be married to an earl! The countess, his mother, would certainly be in Babbleton—and they would all be the guests of the Widow Winkle! No doubt the money with which the widow's house had been purchased, was furnished by his lordship! The widow's house was now beset with friendly visitors, whilst Mrs. Griselda ceased to be tolerated by the quality of the village. And in revenge for this she staid at home and tormented her prisoner. But Patty O'Pan appeared no more in her Arum and Crudle costume, and her offence was forgotten.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WALTER GOES TO WASHINGTON—OFFICE-HUNTING—TIPPING.

When Walter had taken leave of his Aunt Wilsome, carelessly placing the check she gave him in an outside pocket of his overcoat, he hastened to the hotel to join Mr. Plastic, the member of Congress from his district, with whom he was to proceed to Washington.

Mr. Plastic, like many other members newly elected, or just re-elected, without having been blessed with an inordinate share of intellect, and without having acquired a greater amount of information than a majority of his contemporaries, was nevertheless oppressed with a superabundance of vanity, and was known by his most intimate acquaintances to be an egregious egotist. But among strangers, in the reading rooms and parlors of the hotels, he could pass for a great man; and he was gratified to overhear the waiters and porters say, "he's a member of Congress;" and to observe the guests turn and look at him, as he promenaded between the bar and the hall door. Without any other qualifications than an exceedingly numerous and influential connection, and a vast amount of wealth, Mr. Plastic had been lifted from obscurity by Walter's father, and by his means was nominated and elected to the

legislature; and after Mr. Winkle's death he had succeeded him in Congress.

"Well, Mr. Plastic," said Walter, when they were seated in the car, "I suppose my case will soon be decided. I am a novice, however, and it may be well to have an interview with Mrs. Honoria F., before we proceed farther."

"Leave it to me. I will see the President immediately after our arrival. Mrs. Fimble, I know, has some influence."

"And that may be obtained, I suppose?"

"You are a wild fellow! But take care you do not let any of your light remarks reach her ears. In Washington every word spoken is heard, and if it can be used to injure any one it will be repeated. Mrs. F. is thought to be potential at Washington, both in the executive departments, and in the lobbies, library, and committee rooms of the capitol. But the President will see *me*. I have been freshly indorsed by my people, and he will congratulate me on my victory over Roland. We must speak lower. They are staring at me."

At the mention of his triumph over Roland, a tall, gray-haired gentleman sitting in front, turned round and bowed to Plastic.

"How do you do, Mr. Bell? I am glad to see you, sir," said Plastic. "I have been delayed in making my appearance at the capitol by illness in my family. But I see they have put me at the head of a committee."

"I see they have," said Mr. Bell. "The committee on——"

Plastic's voice had been sufficiently loud to attract general attention. But Mr. Bell's announcement had produced quite a commotion, for a majority of the male passengers were either office seekers, or the prosecutors of claims before Congress.

Walter was surprised at the sensation exhibited in front and on either side of him. He then turned his head to see what had been the effect in the rear. Immediately behind him sat a jovial Irishman, who gave him a wink, and an intelligent smile, which, however, Walter was unable at first to comprehend. But after some reflection, and a few more exchanges of glances, he recollected having seen the man before, and bowed to him.

"I think we have met somewhere," said Walter.

"You may say that, Mr. Winkle, and tell the truth."

"Where it was, or when, I confess I do not remember. But as you seem to know my name, perhaps you will tell me yours."

"Patrick McClusky," said the other, in a low voice.

"Oh. I recollect, now," said Walter, in a whisper. Patrick was one of the prisoners at the station on the night of Walter's capture at Professor Point's. He was the keeper of an oyster house, and had somehow got mixed up in a row at the bar, where some one had condemned his brandy. Walter only recollected his name, but could easily recognize his voice, for he had often heard him, at his bar, cry out, "Boy, stew!" "mint julep," &c.

"See Mrs Famble," said Patrick, "that's what I would recommind to ye."

"And where are *you* going, Patrick?"

"Afther an office, too. I want an inspectorship. But I nadn't see the Prisident, nor the Secretary nader. Masthress Honoria Famble will fax my business." He added in a low whisper—"I'm going to pay her a faa of fafty dollars for her sarvices."

"And this young gentleman," said Mr. Bell, addressing himself indirectly to Walter, "you say is the son of my old friend Winkle? Sir," he continued, shaking Walter's hand, "your father was one of the most independent men in Congress. I knew him well, and loved him. And I am sorry to learn his affairs fell into such embarrassment, that his son is under the necessity of taking so desperate a step as to become an office-seeker."

"I hope, sir," said Walter, "the step will not be so disagreeable. If I am not mistaken, you have recently received an appointment."

"Very true. My fortune having been ruined by one I confided in, my friends demanded an office for me. The President very kindly acceded to the request, and my name was sent into the Senate, and there it remains—and I fear it will remain, unless I can satisfactorily divide some forty minor salaries within my gift among the five hundred friends of the Senators. It is a problem I fear which cannot be solved—a price I cannot pay for the office. I regret that my friends proposed my name; but having been nominated, I must defend my character."

"Defend your character, Mr. Bell?" exclaimed Walter,

"I have heard my father say that no man enjoyed a better reputation——"

"It may have been so during his life, and when I was not an applicant for office. But the most immaculate character is easily tarnished, when hung up in the Senate as a common mark for the slanders of defeated competitors, and their [illegible] of disappointed dependents. Rely upon it, young man, if you succeed in obtaining the nomination you seek, that every act of your life will be canvassed in the Senate. Your college sprees, your midnight rambles, your thoughtless words, your lightest acts, will be remembered. But these will be the least of your torments. A thousand slanders will be fabricated——"

"If so, the authors of them shall answer it!"

"If you lose your temper you are lost. No. Follow my example. Get some friend to furnish a list of the charges—and then refute them. Leave the rest to Providence. If you be rejected, with your character saved, retire from the field, and congratulate yourself on so fortunate an escape."

"Go to Misthress Famble," whispered Patrick.

"Might I not succeed," asked Walter, "by securing the services of Mrs. Fimble?"

"Yes—by conciliating her, you might succeed—but it would be at the expense of your honor. I am determined to defy her opposition, since I learn she opposed my appointment." Mr. Bell said this with a quivering lip, and then turned away his face.

When they reached Washington, Walter put up at one of the principal hotels, where his friend Plastic had previously engaged a suite of rooms, in conjunction with several of the members from his State. Walter and Mr. Bell obtained lodgings in the same room. Mr. Bell threw out several hints to his young and inexperienced friend, in regard to the expense of [illegible] Washington, and particularly at the hotels. But Walter [illegible] his appointment would soon be procured [illegible] of Plastic, had no apprehensions that [illegible] be exhausted before he could replenish them from the public treasury.

"Be not too sure of that," said his aged friend. "You may have to dance attendance here for many months. Your friend Plastic is not omnipotent. His influence is not so great as he supposes. It is true he has a vote, and that the admi-

tration will wish to secure—but he is a weak man. My advice is, that you look for cheap lodgings, and count your money."

This conversation took place just before the hour of retiring on the evening of their arrival; and Walter involuntarily drew out his purse and reckoned his gold on the small table before the fire.

"Here are one hundred and ten dollars," said he, in gold. That is my whole fortune. No!" he continued, starting up, and searching the pockets of his overcoat. "My aunt Winkle gave me a check, which I placed among my letters. Here are the letters, but I don't see the check."

"I remember seeing your papers scattered about on the floor of the car," said Mr. Bell. "I hope your check did not fall with them."

"It must have been so. Patrick handed them to me. I hope he didn't keep my check."

"Patrick? What Patrick?"

"Patrick McClusky."

"A great scamp! he is one of my enemies. He applied to me for a clerkship—or rather demanded it in an epistle which I could scarcely read; the grammar, orthography and chirography all being detestable. I wrote him back that my subordinates must at least be capable of discharging the duties assigned them, which he could never do, judging from the epistolary specimen before me. The rascal then sent me an impudent reply, saying he would apply to my 'batters.' No doubt he stole your check. For what amount was it?"

"Upon my word I don't know, I did not look at it."

"Then you can't tell where it was payable, or whether it was drawn to order or bearer. Write immediately to your aunt, and have the payment stopped. But what's that?"

A servant entered bearing a clumsily folded letter superscribed: "Tow Mr. Walther Wankle Esqr."

"It must be for me," said Walter. "Put it on the table. I will look at it when I have searched my pockets once more." Not finding the check, he opened the letter and read as follows: "Misther Walther Wankle, Sir — I have sane Misthress Famble and mi busnes is faxd. She seed you at super and sez she wants to no you. She ses she liks yer lukes, and wud like to sarve you but ses Misther Famble is beging for a nother man. Don't be onasy she kin do mor in

a dozzin husbins. Pleaes anser this and lave at the barr for your obeydant sarvint

"PATRICK MCCLUSKY."

"That rascal has your check!" said Mr. Bell, "and it is payable to order. He wants your signature."

"From the looks of his handwriting," said Walter, "he would hardly be able to make a fortune by forging other people's names. But here's a postscript." He then read aloud the following: "P s misthress famble ses that bell hung up in the senat won't wring onles she puls the klapper

"P MCC."

"It is certain I shall not apply to Mrs Fimble, at all events," said Mr. Bell.

"Is it true she has such influence?" asked Walter

"It may be so. It is strongly suspected. Her husband and herself—it is said they are man and wife, but no one ever heard of them before they came here—live in the most expensive manner, and by some means they have an abundance of money, and find access to all the functionaries of the government. It is a mystery. He is a handsome man, his face exhibiting all the evidences of luxurious living, and she is certainly one of the most beautiful women I ever beheld. They sat nearly opposite at the table——"

"Was that Mrs. Fimble?" asked Walter, with much interest.

"It was. And the Irishman, I doubt not, reported her words correctly, although his pen has given them a different pronunciation. She is not only handsome, as you are ready to admit, but she is accomplished in intrigue, and really charms many of the old senators by the fascinations of her conversation."

"Was not that the senator from —— at her side?"

"It was. And because I did not speak to the lady, she may compel him to vote against me. I care not. But I warn you against the Fimbles, unless you are prepared to pay them tribute."

"From what McCluskey says, it would seem the lady is favorably disposed towards me."

"Beware of her! She might, however, if she were to entertain a partiality for you—and I should not be surprised at it, seeing your form and address—facilitate your object. But

then, I doubt if you would choose to be indebted to any petticoat influence for your office."

Walter admitted that he would prefer to be appointed on the ground of his own merit. Nevertheless, he would not banish from his memory the image of the beautiful creature he had seen at the supper-table. And he retired to his couch without either writing to his aunt or answering Paddy's letter.

The next day Mr. Plastic accompanied Walter to the White House. The M. C. from —— obtained admittance without difficulty. He scarcely deigned to bestow a passing glance on the doorkeeper, that great personage whose favorable attention so many others strove in vain to win.

Plastic approached the President with the utmost familiarity and confidence, and presented his young friend almost in tones of exultation.

"I am glad to see you, gentlemen," said the President. "Sit down. Winkle? Did you say Winkle?"

"Yes, sir," said Plastic, while Walter was amused at the President's seeming sincerity of manner.

"Why, sir," said the President, addressing the young man, "I knew your father well. He was my friend. A brave and honorable gentleman. It gives me pleasure to meet the son of one I esteemed so highly; a son, no doubt, worthy of so true a sire."

"I have no doubt," said Plastic, "you read my young friend's speech at Babbleton. It was terse, concentrated, original, and effective. It contributed much to secure my election."

"Oh, certainly! I recollect it distinctly. We had it before the cabinet, and it was pronounced the boldest and best thing that had occurred during the canvass. My young friend, the administration is much indebted to you; and it will afford me pleasure to serve you in any way in my power"

Walter bowed, thinking such a gesture could never be more appropriate than just at that time.

"That is coming to the point, Mr. President," said Plastic. "My young friend desires to visit England; and Col. Oakdale, who you know will certainly be chosen senator by the Legislature now in session, and myself, have agreed to unite in asking for him the office of Secretary of Legation, or Consul at London."

[redacted]

"Well—let me see—I do not know that they have been irrevocably promised to others; and I am sure no one can produce better claims. Col. Oakdale and yourself are entitled to demand something for your friend; and, besides, my young friend has claims of his own, both on account of his father's services and his own merits."

"I am sure, sir," said Walter, "I am deeply indebted to you for your kind expressions."

"Kind expressions merely, my friend," said the President, "are not deemed of much value here,—eh, Plastic?"

"No, indeed," said Plastic. "They are as plenty as blackberries, and as cheap as Potomac herrings. You will be overwhelmed with them in this city, and might starve on them, if the President were not truly your friend."

"True, Plastic," said his excellency. "But I will be his friend, both on account of his father's services and his own claims." He then wrote the following familiar note to the Secretary of State:—"Mr. Walter Winkle, the son of an old friend from ———, is an applicant for the office of Secretary of Legation in London. I wish him to have the appointment, or else the Consulate at the same place. Let me know immediately which would be the most agreeable and advantageous position, and which has the fewest obstacles in the way."

Walter ran his eye over the note while the President and Plastic were discussing some point of policy in reference to the business before the House of Representatives. [illegible] was not sure that he comprehended the last line [illegible] upon the whole very satisfactory.

[illegible] with the President being [illegible] Walter [illegible] next to the Department [illegible] [illegible] they were [illegible] [illegible] the Presidential [illegible] and his brows were [illegible] [illegible] the lines. It was [illegible] [illegible] consultation [illegible] the department [illegible] the secretary by the applicant [illegible] They had, nevertheless, been sent down to him by the President himself, and the parties were to be convinced that

ters of that nature and magnitude could not be accomplished without his participation in the work.

After a silence of several minutes, the secretary remarked that the President's request should be complied with; and Walter uttered a profusion of acknowledgments.

"It will certainly be a pleasure for me to *remove* any of the obstacles the President alludes to," said the secretary, and then added, "if it be in my power to do so."

"I understand," said the young man, "that both places are vacant, or will soon be so."

"That is very true. But the obstacles do not lie in that direction. There is never any difficulty in finding or making vacancies. One half of our agents abroad are utterly incompetent, and the other moiety are unfaithful, so that there are always a sufficient number ripe for removal. The difficulty is in deciding who shall succeed them. Among the many applicants, it is a very embarrassing operation to determine whose claims are the strongest."

"I hoped," said Walter, "there were but few if any applications, as yet, for either of the positions. The President did not intimate there were any."

"He did not mention them, but the obstacles he refers to relate to other applicants. Mr. Boozle," said the minister, addressing his private secretary in the next room, "let me see the number of applications for the two vacant places in London."

A moment after Mr. Boozle came in, preceded by a messenger bearing a large basket filled with bundles of papers.

"I did not desire to know how many bushels," said the great diplomatic functionary, "but the number."

"These are the applications for the consulate," said Boozle. "They number seven hundred. There are two baskets for the other, numbering a thousand."

"That is all, Boozle?" said the minister, smiling at the dismay of Walter.

"But," said Plastic with an air of importance, and recollecting that he had been requested by the President to oppose a motion in the House for the production of a certain diplomatic correspondence, which it was understood the secretary was averse to having made public, "I presume the claims of *my* friend cannot be inferior to any."

"Unquestionably not! It is true there are among the ap-

plicants several nephews of former Presidents, and, indeed a near relative of the present incumbent, and many sons and nephews of ex-secretaries and senators. But you know our organ has condemned nepotism, and therefore we are committed against it. Besides, we are quite secure in the Senate, while the majority in the House is less reliable. I was astonished to see the motion entertained for the production of the Algerine correspondence."

"Oh, we'll vote it down to-day. And I must hasten to the capitol. I hope, Mr. Secretary, there will be no delay in this business of my young friend."

"I think not. I will immediately send the information required to the President. I shall be happy to see you again to-morrow, Mr. Winkle."

Plastic and Walter withdrew; but before they left the building, the former was called aside by Mr. Boozle, who desired a few moments' conversation in private.

When the member rejoined his young friend, it was with a troubled countenance, real or affected. "Such prodigacy!" said he; "such monstrous corruption, was never heard of before, and surely never existed in any other government!"

"It is some state secret, I suppose," said Walter, "which none but officials should know."

"None but rogues, it seems to me," said Plastic. "I will tell you in the strictest confidence," he continued, as they walked along. "Boozle assures me that both places have been already promised to the proteges of two members."

"By the President?"

"I suppose so—certainly by the secretary. They must have forgotten it in the multiplicity of their engagements."

"I have read somewhere," said Walter, "that great public functionaries possess the faculty of forgetfulness. I hope that Mr. Boozle will not take it upon himself to remind them of their former promises; and I will dance attendance upon them so successfully they shall not be able to forget their pledges to me. And I had better tip this private secretary in the manner described by Gil Blas, when he was confidential secretary of the Spanish minister. But I have not the means. I might, however, make him a promise you know."

"You have read to some purpose, Walter, and I think you will have the address to carry your point. But the matter

stands thus: The members referred to make politics a *trade*. You understand?"

"Perfectly, I think. They are likewise to be tipped. But where would be the incumbent's compensation."

"The consulship is worth $5,000 per annum, with the perquisites, which can be realized by good management."

"Well. The two members conciliated, how shall we dispose of the two protegés? Tip them too?"

"Only one of them can be disappointed, you know."

"Exactly, I cannot have both offices. And therefore but one of the members will have to be tipped, unless you take——"

"Me? Don't suppose any thing of the kind! I should be offended if I thought you capable of conceiving such an idea. But the applicants who have obtained the promises had agreed to pay the members ten per cent. of their salaries, fees and perquisites; and I understand they have already advanced certain sums. The member who will have to relinquish the appointment procured for his friend, will have to refund, and that would be inconvenient."

"Unless I reimbursed the amount."

"Precisely so. Are you prepared to do it?"

"But the one that had the promise? How will they dispose of him?"

"Boozle says that can be managed. A previous promise to *you*, which had been forgotten. Something of that sort. But are you prepared to furnish Boozle the means to tip the member?"

"Will he furnish me the name of the member, so that I can treat with him directly?"

"I think not."

"Do you know his name?"

"Yes—but I am bound in honor not to divulge it."

"Will you not see him for me, so there can be no necessity for the interposition of Boozle?"

"Yes. I will undertake to pay him the amount you send."

"I shall send him nothing."

"What do you mean, then?"

"To punish him.

"Punish him?"

"Yes. He's a scoundrel, and you must tell me his name."

"I shall do no such thing!"

"Then I will hold you responsible. Good day, sir! The

only way in which I can be conciliated will be the immediate notification of my appointment. You can now test the extent of your influence."

And Walter turned away from the astonished member, boiling with indignation and anger, and resolved at the instant to make a public exposure of the corrupt practices of the trading politicians. But before he reached his lodgings he had time to reflect that the revelation had been confidentially made, and that it would be out of his power to avail himself of it in the manner he at first intended.

In the afternoon, as Walter was sitting in his room pondering over the events of the morning, he was startled by the abrupt entrance of Mr. Bell, who held in his hand a large envelope, bearing the broad seal of the government.

"I hope you have your commission, sir," said Walter.

"Yes—you may congratulate me on my victory," said Mr. Bell; "but I had hard fighting for it. I preferred a final decision to further delay. This is the tenth time I have been to Washington on this business, and I resolved it should be the last. They confirmed me by a majority of one, and that result was obtained by stratagem."

"Stratagem?"

"I had to enter the lists against Mrs. Fimble, and I out generalled her. My friend from Virginia conceived the idea and I acted by his advice. When the Senate was about to go into executive session, we contrived to have an album sent to Mr. - - — for his autograph. He was told it was for Mrs. Fimble, who was about to leave the city. He wrote his name in the book, and then followed the boy, who soon eluded him. Now Mr. ———, like many others, had been fascinated by the beauty of Mrs. F., and the charms of her conversation. Although quite seventy years old, Mr. ——— took such delight in conducting the young lady to the levees and soirees and along the avenue, that he could not bear the thought of being deprived of that pleasure so abruptly, and so he resolved to seek an interview, and know the reason why she was departing so unceremoniously. He found her here, in her suite of apartments surrounded by the wives and daughters of the functionaries of the government, and I need not tell you their surprise was mutual when the object of his visit had been explained, which did not occur for more than an hour. He hastened back to the capitol, but the Senate had adjourned just

as he descended from his carriage. My friend from Virginia met him, and taking his arm, kept his attention fixed upon other matters of public importance, until I had time to procure my commission. I shall leave by the next train—and I think you had better go with me. You shall have an office in the city in *my* department."

"And deprive my friend, Patrick McClusky?"

"Yes—all the paddies in the world. I see you and I understand each other. We are both Know Nothings, and we have the same mission. The secretary has given me a list of names, from which he says the President and himself desire me to select three fourths of my subordinates. One third of them are foreigners, and at least one fourth are grog-sellers. I shall not obey. They may remove me from office; but I will not be moved from my determination. If one is to be responsible for the faithful performance of the duties of his office, he ought to enjoy the privilege of selecting honest and capable subordinates."

"I agree with you, most heartily. But I suppose my appointment will be sent in to-day or to-morrow."

Walter then related the substance of his interview with the President and the secretary. But Mr. Bell shook his head incredulously, though at the same time wishing his young friend every success. He could not forbear telling him, however, that the appointment which had been conferred on him had previously been promised another, and that he had been surprised when he heard his name was sent up to the Senate. "There is many a slip," said he, "between the cup and the lip; and if you should be disappointed, come to me. But have the matter brought to a speedy conclusion." He then took leave of Walter, as it was near the time when the next train left the city. He promised to see Miss Wilsome Winkle, and learn something further in relation to the lost check, not doubting McClusky knew all about it. If it had been presented under a forged indorsement, the exposure of the rascal would at least dispose of his pretensions for office, and it might be the means of putting some money in Walter's purse.

A short time after the departure of Mr. Bell, Walter was waited on by Mr. Boozle, who bore him the comfortable assurance that from what he could learn at the White House, and at the Department, it was settled that he should be appointed consul to London. A new minister was to go to

England, and as the secretary of legation was a sort of confidential clerk to the plenipotentiary, that functionary was usually consulted, and the selection made among his personal acquaintances. For that reason Walter had been selected for the consulate. Boozle did not intimate any thing about the tipping portion of the negotiation; but merely congratulated his young friend on his prompt success.

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CHAPTER XXX.

WALTER BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH HONORIA—XAVIER THE JESUIT CHIEF—WALTER RECEIVES LETTERS FROM VIRGINIA.

WALTER called the next day at the Department, but could not see the secretary; he was with the President, and of course the President could not be seen when in consultation with the cabinet ministers. But he saw Mr Boozle, who assured him that his appointment was a settled thing, and that he need not give himself any further trouble about it.

Walter spent the remainder of the day at the capitol, and was not at all annoyed to find the dark lustrous eyes of Mrs Fimble, who sat near him in the gallery of the House, frequently turned in his direction. He was quite as attractive as a gentleman, as his sister was as a lady, and he was not slow to attribute the glances of the reigning belle to his superior endowments. Nor was he the less flattered when he saw an almost imperceptible nod was sufficient to draw the most distinguished members in the Hall to her side. At the [illegible] on the avenue, in short wherever they met, Walter had the satisfaction to observe that he arrested the belle's attention, and it was not remarkable that he should anxiously desire an opportunity of being formally introduced. But there was no one present who could render that service except Plastic, and as he had fallen out with the member (for which he now [illegible] he expressed his wits to devise some other means of becoming acquainted with the lady and fortunately [illegible] him for Honoria herself, upon a decision taking place on some interesting question, finding her company of honorables suddenly dispersed, rose up and moved in the direction of

the winding stairway. As she was passing near Walter, she smiled, and calling him familiarly by his name, said they ought to be acquainted, as it had been three days since they were dwelling under the same roof. Walter was no novice in gallantry; and so, by the time they were at the foot of the stairs, no one could have supposed they had not been long upon terms of intimacy.

They avoided the gallant old senator, who stood ready to assist the lady into his carriage, by passing through the grounds on the west side of the capitol.

"I will not meet him," said Mrs. Fimble, "for we should quarrel. He suffered Mr. Bell to pass the Senate, when his vote would have still kept him hanging there."

"But I understood from my friend, Mr. Bell," said Walter, "that it was on your account he left his seat."

"An old politician to be bamboozled in that manner!"

"Old politicians," said Walter, "as I learn by my reading, as well as experienced generals, have been, in all countries and in all ages, subject to the caprices—or rather the influences—of the divine sex. If Antony lost an empire to follow an Egyptian mistress, surely Mr. —— is not to be condemned for a merely temporary abandonment of his seat in the Senate, to arrest the flight of a much——"

"Enough! I know what you would say. If the old gentleman himself had pronounced such a speech, I could not have withheld my forgiveness; and as Mr. Bell is your friend, I shall not harshly reproach him. But my objection to Mr. Bell was——" she paused.

"May I know what it was?" asked Walter.

"I have understood he belonged to a secret order, which would disfranchise foreigners and Catholics; and I am a Catholic."

Walter averted his head just in time to escape the range of her dark eyes. It was evidently her design to scrutinise his features closely after the announcement she had just made, but she was prevented.

"But you are no foreigner, and you do not wish to exercise the privilege of voting."

"Oh, the members of the secret order, I presume, do not war against the women. I am sure, now, if you were one of the Know Nothings, I should not be apprehensive of any serious results arising from your hostility. But," she con-

tinued, with her magical orbs bearing full upon him. "I cannot avoid manifesting a sympathy for the members of our church, foreign and native, whose privileges and welfare are menaced by a secret organization, whose ramifications extend into every locality, and whose members and operations are known to none but themselves."

"I do not fear them," said Walter, returning the searching glance of the beautiful lady. "I do not fear them—at least any more than I do the insidious order of the Jesuits which, it is said, aim to obtain the supreme power in all governments. I know not whether the successors of Loyola, Francis Xavier and Borgia, admit the diviner sex into their counsels—but the danger must be very great if they do."

"And, really, one might suppose you regarded me as one of their instruments!"

"If that were the case, I should not fear their machinations. It could not be their purpose to inflict evil, and the new order of Know Nothings would soon be overthrown by them, unless they resorted to similar means for the purposes of hostility and defence."

"A capital suggestion, which I must not fail to repeat to my father confessor. But then the enemy might improve upon your suggestion, and employ instruments like yourself to circumvent the fair agents of the Jesuits! What then?"

"What then? Why, it seems to me I would like to turn propagandist. Seriously, though, my dear madam, I am a Protestant, and do fear the Jesuits more than the Know Nothings. Notwithstanding the protestations of the Catholic converts in Congress, or rather the demagogues—such, I mean as once boasted of their Puritanical descent, but who, for very low originally, never could descend at all—I say, notwithstanding their solemn assertions to the contrary, we see by every arrival from abroad, that the Jesuits in Italy proclaim an absolute monarchy as the only form of government sanctioned by their faith, and still assert that the Apostolic head of the Church is superior to kings in temporal authority."

"I will answer that speech another time. You speak like an enemy, but do not look like one."

"I speak in defence of Protestantism and my country—and to my countrywoman."

"But a Catholic. Remember that. You shall answer for it!"

They were now overtaken on the avenue by the carriage of the infatuated old senator, and Honoria (he used only that portion of Mrs. F.'s name) was constrained to abandon her young gallant, who had already excited the fear and envy of more than one official aspirant.

That night the dark, lustrous eyes of Honoria illumined the dreams of Walter. In the shifting scenes of the phantasmagoria that filled his slumbers, she was ever present, and always in the attitude of striving unceasingly to entice him from the path he had been intent upon pursuing.

And while he sighed upon his solitary pillow, the doors leading to the apartments of Honoria were stealthily opened by the servants of the Society of Jesus, who had been distributed in all the hotels, and the modern Father Xavier was noiselessly admitted into the presence of the watchful woman.

"Daughter!" said he, sternly, when the doors were closed behind him, and he stood alone before the prostrate Honoria, who sobbed at his feet; "you have been neglectful of your duty, and thereby inflicted upon the sacred cause a wound which may not be easily healed."

"Oh, father!" said she, "it was the result of an imposition which no one could have anticipated!"

"Every thing inimical to our interests which can possibly occur, should be anticipated and provided against. Your eyes, or the eyes of your agents, should be upon every movement—their ears open to every sound. Where were your pages?"

"They were present, but did not suspect——"

"Remove them. Substitute others whose suspicions never can be lulled. This man, so unnecessarily approved by the Senate, will persecute our order to the utmost; and we shall have to resort to the extreme limits of our power, to enjoy any portion of the patronage within his gift. We must substitute other men for the present applicants; and to enable them to stand the tests which will no doubt be applied, they must be absolved from the sin of falsehood, for the sake of the end, and for the benefit of the cause. And all this, in consequence of a relaxation of vigilance on your part."

"Forgive me, father! You shall not have cause to censure me again."

"Arise. You are forgiven. You will atone for the past!"

"I will endeavor to do so, father," said she, rising and occupying a stool at the feet of the priest, who sat in a large cushioned chair. "I will strive to incense the President and the secretary against Mr Bell, so that he may be removed."

"No, daughter. It will not avail. You might easily have him dismissed; but the elimination would weaken us and injure our cause in other respects. The matter has been calmly weighed, and he must remain, unless removed without any agency of ours. There is other work for you to accomplish. One half the offices in the country, and more than a moiety of the lucrative contracts, are already in our hands. We have the highest seat in the Judiciary, two members of the Cabinet, and forty thousand subordinates in various places. We shall elect the next President."

"I know it, father! We have succeeded completely in gaining over to our cause, and quite imperceptibly to himself the lion-hearted orator of Virginia."

"Yes. He will be the new *cœur de lion*. But we must likewise have our sentinels at the outposts. Our general who finds the minister at Paris impregnable and impracticable will have him destroyed. The panic-stricken champion at London, must yield his position to one of firmer nerves. These are the objects which must never be absent from your thoughts. Remember, they are of paramount importance. But you are not to neglect the minor appointments. If we cannot have the plenipotentiaries, we must, at least, secure their secretaries, and as many of the consuls as possible."

"There is one, father ——"

"About to be appointed. I know such is the purpose. It must be prevented!"

"Alas, then, he, too, is an enemy!"

"He is! But you may confine him with the silken fetters of your blandishments. Beware, though, that he does not fetter you! If he should conquer your heart, you will be lost for ever, both on earth, and in the world to come. He, too, has the lion-heart, but it could never be made to subserve our purposes. He must be beguiled by your arts—not [illegible]. His family, which have been the subjects of our particular attention for years, are altogether incorrigible. His father was reduced to poverty by our means and yet his mother is incapable of grief; and his portionless

sister, in spite of the literal execution of our commands by Roland, will probably become a British peeress; nevertheless, she will be removed from the scene of our gigantic operations. His aunt in New York, will become an imbecile. The poison is administered in the guise of sentimental novels. His aunt in Philadelphia, has conceived, under our tutelage, an absorbing passion for cards. His uncle is a monamaniac, in the keeping of one of our secret converts, who, in consideration of the marriage we stipulated, is to convert the parish minister to our faith, under a dispensation permitting him to enjoy the society of his wife and children."

"And, father," said Honoria, "it was true, then, as the papers said, that the singular speech of Walter Winkle defeated the election of our candidate."

"It was, daughter. But it is not to be regretted, since Plastic is likely to become a convert. Roland durst never disobey or betray us; but he has grovelling passions, and may be destroyed by one of his own acts, performed without our knowledge. He is, without knowing it, the legal husband of a poor inoffensive creature, and the consequences resulting from his rash act, may involve him in ruin. He is watched by a Scotch lawyer—a Presbyterian—implacable in his nature. But as to this young man. Secure him in your toils, but beware of him. Keep him. If he escapes, he will become the husband of a senator's daughter—I mean the daughter of one who will be a senator, and whose hostility to our order can never be mitigated."

"You may rely upon me, father!" said Honoria, with flashing eyes.

"I think so, my daughter. Both the religious devotee, and the woman, will be arrayed against one in the attitude of a rival. But, I say again, beware! In casting your blandishments around him, take heed you be not yourself ensnared, as was the princess of ———, who expiated her crime in the damp dungeon of Bohemia! But you have permission to distract and disarm the editor of the Know Nothing Organ. The end is to be accomplished. You may use the means, with all the circumspection and prudence your position may seem to demand."

"It shall be done, father, if you command it, and if it——"

"I do command it, by the authority vested in me by our general! It is the first time during the centuries of our ex-

istence, that we have been called upon to contend against so powerful an enemy, or one so difficult to overthrow. A secret order! A mysterious organization! They would wrest the weapons from our hands. In desperate cases we must resort to desperate remedies. We had all things in readiness to throw off the mask, when the devil himself presented to us this masked foe! We must overcome both the powers of earth and hell!"

"The holy virgin help us!"

"Ay. And we must help ourselves. You had a letter from your husband to-day. Our agents did not open it. You will tell me the contents."

"Willingly, father. He says the profits from the last contract will be seventy-five thousand dollars. But that sixty thousand dollars of it will be demanded for the support of the press."

"The editors must not receive it. I will devise other means of avoiding so useless an expenditure. Such writers as he refers to are only useful when entirely dependent. But Mr. Fimble sighs to return. Such is my information, and he would hasten the execution of his mission by the employment of men not belonging to our order. Tell him my eyes are on him, and that his most secret thoughts and desires are known. Say that he may not indulge the hope of escape with fortune—but the danger is great that the beautiful Honoria may speedily be called a widow."

"Oh, Father Xavier!"

"Murmur not at the decrees of our general, whatever they may be. Does not he, do I not daily make sacrifices that the great end may be accomplished? Did not the great Borgia renounce a throne, wife and children? Ignatius ever comfort, and Francis life itself? Read your books. It was not for the enjoyment of a boon that you were nominally bestowed upon him—and it was never regarded as a boon by you. Start not—you see I know every thing. He may live if he continues obedient—and you shall remain here if your efforts prove successful." Honoria bowed, and the Jew chief departed.

CHAPTER XXX.

WALTER'S WONDERFUL ADVENTURES IN WASHINGTON—THE POLITICAL PANDEMONIUM.

Days flew past, and yet Walter did not obtain his commission. The papers throughout the country announced the appointment, and yet it had not been sent in to the Senate. But the young man's patience was not exhausted. Honoria continued to amuse him by day, and he dreamt of her at night.

Nevertheless there were others who desired to know something in regard to the state of his affairs; and among those were his mother, and her guest, Virginia Oakdale. Walter had written to his mother but once since his sojourn in Washington, and to Virginia not at all, except in a postscript to his mother's letter. And now, when the second or third letter from his parent was placed in his hands, it must be owned he did not hasten to break the seal with the same intensity of affection he had experienced upon the reception of the first. She wrote thus:—"At Babbleton we see the papers. From them we learn that you have become an official dignitary. But we never could have supposed your exaltation would make you forget your mother and your friends *so soon*. We thought at least you would communicate the intelligence by letter, and not leave us to learn the fact, like the rest of the world, through the newspapers. Still we are rejoiced at your success, and humbly claim the privilege of tendering our congratulations.

"Would you deign to read the news here, if I promise not to be tedious? Well, I promise. The mortgage on our house and grounds has been paid. Will you felicitate me on that? You must not ask where the money came from, for that is a secret upon which to exercise your faculty of guessing. But that is not all. Colonel Oakdale's debt to Roland has been paid. That *must* be news for you. You would never guess who loaned him the money, and I will tell you, so that you may pour out your gratitude to him should your relations with the family of the senator—we have just heard of his elec-

tion by the Legislature—ever become more intimate than they have been hitherto. It was John Dowly, whom every one supposed to be in indigent circumstances. Blessings on my old beau.

"Your uncle Napoleon is in a sad condition. Gusset has become a perfect termagant, and I cannot pardon her. She keeps him pretty closely confined to the library having discovered that your grandfather's will vests only a life estate in him if he should die without children, and I suppose she has but slight hopes of cutting you off in that way. Bawsen, the Scotch lawyer, is in frequent consultations with her. But Sergeant Blore assures me the lawyer has been feed to protect your interests. Your uncle's personal estate is large, and would, I believe, in the event of no will being made, on his demise, go to his widow. The will he signed, no doubt, was destroyed by Gusset, when she learned—and how she learned it is a mystery—that he had but a life estate in the land.

"The poor sergeant never comes into the village until after nightfall, for fear of meeting Mrs. Edwards. She beat him up in his quarters last week; but he pointed a great gun, and she fled. I believe he would have fired. He declares he will never be taken alive.

"Bill Dizzle still brings his frogs and turtles to Patty O'Pan, and they eat them cosily beside the kitchen fire. Whether they have been married or not, I am unable to say.

"I suppose you correspond with Lucy, and have learned that your Aunt Blount's Scotch housekeeper has been robbing her for many years. The Arums and Crudles receive daily bulletins from New York. The girls boast a great beau, their beaus and conquests. Lowe is there, and I believe Roland spends a portion of his time in that city.

"Now I think you have all the news. Virginia may accompany her father to Washington in a few weeks. She has no word or message to send you. She was offended that you did not write. The lines intended for her person in the letter I received, she merely glanced at, saying she [illegible] of prying into other people's letters. If [illegible] write her immediately, she will inevitably [illegible] have [illegible] new beauty. Oh, I [illegible] [illegible] friend, Mr. Snobson, was her [illegible] other day. He was merely passing, he said, and [illegible] not introduce him to Virginia. But she introduced he

the little hussy, and found amusement playing with the poor fellow's heart as a kitten does with a mouse. I hear nothing from your aunt in Philadelphia, except when Dizzle occasionally carries her a brace of wild ducks. He says he always finds her at whist. Come home, or write soon.

"Your affectionate mother,

"EDITH WINKLE."

Walter snatched up a pen to write a scolding letter to Virginia, but threw it aside as he heard the clock strike the hour when the doors of the Presidential Palace were to be thrown open for the reception of the promiscuous company that usually resorted thither.

As he surveyed himself in the glass, the thought occurred to him that it was exceedingly absurd to witness the decrepit senator of seven decades, bearing off the angelic Honoria, while he was under the necessity of proceeding alone, on foot, or riding in an omnibus. He resolved it should not be; and he quickly put in execution the thought that flashed across his mind. Knowing the senator would have to pass his door before descending to the great hall, in front of which his carriage was in waiting, he determined to arrest his progress. He emptied his ink-bottle on some waste paper, and seizing a cord which lay under his bed, sallied out into the corridor, and tied the ends to two chairs standing several feet apart. The saturated paper was carefully placed upon the floor, and then he hastened back to his chamber.

In a few minutes a tremendous racket was heard among the chairs, with which in the darkness the senator had become inextricably entangled. In his desperate struggles several were crushed to atoms; but the cord being wound round his legs, he was thrown down upon the floor. Walter seizing his lamp rushed out, and found the old gentleman venting curses upon the children of the guests who had been playing with the chairs during the day. Walter assisted the senator to rise, and conducted him into his chamber.

"I hope, sir, you have received no injury," said the young rogue.

"Injury! Look at my vest! It was white, sir, a few minutes since. Now look at it! Look at my hands! What the devil is it? Ink! It's on my cravat, and my face!" he continued, turning to Walter's glass. "Those mischievous

children! children at a hotel! I'll sue the landlord for damages! A senator to be tripped up in this manner and blackened with ink! It will require a week's scrubbing to remove the stains! The infernal children!"

"It is a great outrage, sir!" said Walter.

"It is, my young friend. And I am glad you regard it in that light. If any of my mess were to see me thus, and learn the manner of my fall, they would give vent to explosions of laughter, and take possession of my carriage and Honoria together. They shall not see me. *You* sympathize with me gravely and sincerely, and Honoria I know entertains a favorable opinion of your merit. Go to her, and describe my mishap, but in such a way that nothing ludicrous shall appear in it. Say I will follow if I succeed in removing these feathers from my hands and face. Go, my young friend. The carriage is at the door, and the lady is awaiting me in the parlor."

Walter did not linger. Although surprised, Honoria did not appear to be pained to learn that her septuagenarian beau was rendered incapable of accompanying her to the soiree. In perfect beauty and spirits, and flashing with diamonds, she accepted the arm of Walter and was conducted to the carriage when one of the senator's men, who had been sent thither for the purpose, held open the door. After requesting the coachman to drive slowly, Walter followed his precious charge into the carriage, and occupied the seat at her side, where she welcomed him with a smile.

"Now," said she, in a low tone, as they moved slowly away, "you must confess that you had some agency in producing this *accident*."

"You were the cause of it," said Walter.

"I? Oh I understand! But you might have seriously injured the old gentleman. It was very, very naughty of you. But as you say I was the cause of it, I must forgive you. And I must not betray you, or you would never have access to your reputation."

"Ah!" said Walter, "it seems that my appointment is never to be sent in."

"Why do they delay it?"

"It is a mystery—unless it may be accounted for in the withdrawal of Preston's recommendation. It seems that I gave him offence. But, still, the President, whom I have seen since then, assures me my claims, on account of his friendship for

my father, and my own merits—the very words he used—are quite sufficient. The difficulty must lie in the State Department—but I can learn nothing from the secretary."

"What does he say?"

"He tells me to have patience, and to come often for instructions in regard to the duties. I am daily wasting the precious hours over international law and a confused multiplicity of treaty stipulations, perhaps to no purpose. I have heard of one gentleman, relying on their promises of an appointment to France, who spent several months in learning the French verbs, but at last only travelled home in disgust."

"I wish I could aid you—but then in the event of another such accident as happened this evening, what should I do?"

"Every one assures me your aid would be effectual. And yet I confess I should leave the city with reluctance. But necessity knows no law, or rather yields to no inclinations, and whether I obtain my commission or not, I must soon take my leave of you."

"Indeed! Why? Are your finances low, like those of most of the hangers-on at the capital."

"Yes, truly. I think I should have abandoned the pursuit of office before this, if there had been no other attraction."

"Again I am the cause! Well, it is incumbent on me to replenish your purse. Have you ever visited Aurini's saloon?"

"The gambling hell? No!"

"None but gentlemen are admitted—and they say none but the rich can lose, and their losses are enormous. What becomes of the money is a mystery. My husband has been there twice since we came to Washington, and was both times quite successful. He borrowed this ring of me," she continued, taking one from her finger and placing it on Walter's hand, "and pledged it for ten dollars, at the farthest table from the door, at the extreme end of the room. He won invariably. Keep the ring and test your fortune."

"I will wear the ring," said Walter.

"If you do not use it in the manner my husband did," said Honoria, "you must return it at the end of three days. My husband may return; and he may have use for it. He deems it a charmed ring. The carriage stops. We are at the portico."

They descended from the carriage, and were swept along

[redacted]

with the stream of human beings into the presence of the chief Executive of the nation, who strode forward to meet H[illegible], with whom he exchanged most cordial salutations, and [illegible] whom he bestowed the most flattering speeches. He [illegible] his own reign was over for the night, that he [illegible] eclipsed by a brighter luminary, etc. Then turning to Wa[illegible] whose hand he shook very heartily, he said: "My [illegible] friend, you have the most potent advocate in the city. I [illegible] have to invoke your influence with your friend to [illegible] her to exercise her power over the legislators for the [illegible]mation of the great measures of the government. Whatever she decrees must be the law."

"I hope she will have pity, then, on her humble servant," said Walter.

"What do you mean?" she asked, as they emerged from the circle round the President, and moved away towards [illegible] great east room.

"Oh, any thing or nothing. I supposed it necessary to make some response to the President's nonsense, and did not know exactly what I was uttering."

"I saw Father Xavier turn his piercing eyes towards us. He is my confessor. Be careful what you say in his hearing — and remember that he sees and hears almost every thing."

Walter was on the eve of uttering a sarcasm on the priest when he perceived the Jesuit had followed them, and thought he could discover a tremor in the fair hand that lay upon his arm. Honoria sank on a sofa, and Walter was [illegible] by Mr. Boozle. The priest uttered a few words in the lady's ear and disappeared in the crowd. And then Honoria was surrounded by a number of worshippers. The high [illegible] dignitaries of other nations, as well as the American, [illegible] their adulations. And she surprised every one by the extent of her information. She knew something of the history of every man of mark who approached her, of their [illegible] their hopes, their fears, and her witty repartees [illegible] most startling allusions, which however, [illegible] for whom they were intended. She was [illegible] with the details of every intrigue for the presidency, [illegible] to destroy the prospects of the most prominent [illegible] and every secret of diplomacy. She knew [illegible] the designs of ambitious mothers, the longings and aversions of the smiling daughters, the chances of expectants, and the

impending destruction of confident incumbents. No wonder, then, that her words were listened to with the reverence of oracles from the lips of a pythoness; that her hostility should be deprecated, and her favor implored by all.

Even Walter, from her supposed partiality for him, was overwhelmed with attentions by the greedy crew of minor office-seekers.

"Mr. Winkle," said Boozle, leading Walter into an obscure recess, "every body is asking why the official announcement of your confirmation by the Senate is delayed."

"If I knew the proper one to interrogate," said Walter, I would like to ask the same question; I presume, however, my name has not yet reached the Senate."

"No—not yet. Do you know how the papers which have been announcing your appointment obtained the information?"

"I do not I suppose they had it from the Department."

"They are opposition papers. Such premature announcements do no good."

"I had no agency in them. You will please say as much for me to the secretary. Perhaps something of this kind has caused the delay. I am growing very impatient, and have expended my money."

"I am sure I wish you had thousands. But you are aware I suppose that Mr. Plastic has withdrawn ——."

"I anticipated as much. He is a man of no weight, of no importance whatever except in his own estimation; and between us, he will never have another opportunity to misrepresent our people."

"Besides," continued the imperturbable Boozle, "some one has informed the secretary that you are a Native American."

"I was not born in Rome. What is the Secretary himself but a native? This is trifling with me; if such difficulties are to be trumped up to delay or defeat my appointment, I will see him to-morrow, and know exactly what I am to expect."

"What I mean is that it is intimated you are a Know Nothing. It is true men of all parties are joining that secret order; but the organ of the administration having taken ground against it, the K. N's are to be henceforth regarded as our enemies."

"That may be the policy of the administration, and I shall say nothing in opposition to it. I shall answer no ques-

tions—I will not be interrogated by any man living in regard to such things as concern myself alone."

"Don't be hasty. I have not said the secretary believes the intimation well founded——"

"What business is it of the secretary's to believe or disbelieve any thing of the sort concerning me? I have not changed my principles, and do not mean to change them. If I have sufficient claims and qualifications for the office I [illegible] let him and the President decide my case on such grounds alone!"

"No doubt they will. But you must admit they have cause to deprecate the furious assaults daily formed in the Know Nothing organ. These attacks are exceedingly annoying."

"No question of it. And I think some of them are deserved——"

"Mr. Winkle!"

"You must admit too many foreigners are permitted to exercise control. The people will not stand it; and the administration ought to be warned in time."

"I agree with you, to some extent. But then the [illegible] ridicule the editor of the American deals in—the [illegible] sarcasms he employs—see! there he is now—and he has the effrontery to come here with his great blue goggles."

"Oh, my dear sir, this house belongs to the people, and on public occasions such as the present, the President has no authority to exclude friend or foe."

"Very true. But still it would be a meritorious act [illegible] enemy of the President——"

"[illegible] In what way do you mean?"

"By [illegible] as act—such as your father [illegible]"

"My [illegible] pulled some one's nose for slandering [illegible]"

"Yes, [illegible] and subdued the [illegible] your friend, and the American, as [illegible] daily. If you were to make it a [illegible]"

"[illegible] he would bestow the appointment [illegible] Is that it?"

"Certainly not! No man was ever killed in Washington by an editor. You need have no apprehension."

"Apprehension? I do not understand you. Let me have a just quarrel—and I *may* have one—and we'll see who'll be troubled with apprehensions. I know the editor of the American—and I am satisfied he has a pacific disposition. Why the deuce don't your own organ-man resent some of the charges brought against the President and himself?"

"I know not. But will we see you to-morrow?"

"Yes—for the last time, I think, unless my matter be promptly disposed of."

They separated, and Walter approached as near as he could to the great centre of attraction, the brilliantly diademed Honoria. She was flashing her glorious eyes at the editor of the American, who listened enraptured to her thrilling accents. Walter perceived immediately that she had some design upon his friend; and although he might feel some pricks of jealousy, he did not deem it expedient to attempt an interposition. The editor, though evidently charmed, was not embarrassed; and when the promenade was resumed, the queenly Honoria took possession of his arm.

It was quite late when the discomfited senator appeared: but his presence sufficed to banish Walter from the side of the reigning belle. Not so with the editor of the American. Satisfied he had the approbation of the lady herself, all the powers of the government were unequal to the task of banishing him from her presence; and he stood at the door of the carriage and assisted her up the steps, when she retired from the White House, although the senator was a bitter opponent of his party.

Walter returned to his lodgings on foot, having declined the faint invitation of the senator to occupy a seat in his carriage. He found two letters on his table. The first he opened was from Mr. Bell, requesting him to transmit the letter he had received from Patrick McClusky, that the writing on the back of the lost check, which had been found, might be compared with it. He said he entertained no doubt that Paddy was a bungling forger; and although he might not be able to convict him of the offence, still he could frighten him off the list of pertinacious applicants for office. His aunt declined replacing the check, having seen the announcement of his appointment to a lucrative post, and supposing him to be in no need of pecuniary assistance.

The other was from his landlord, enclosing his bill. Wal-

ter counted the few coins remaining in his purse, and ascertained that he did not possess one fifth the amount demanded. What was he to do? His eye fell upon the ring which Honoria had placed on his finger. He gazed at it [illegible] abstraction, and was only awakened from his lethargy by the returning consciousness that he was unable to satisfy [illegible] demand. Starting up, he determined to go to Aurinia. In all his life he had never won or lost a dollar in any such establishment; and certainly nothing less than the instigation of such a creature as Honoria could have induced him to try the hazard of the game. But why should he pledge the ring when he still possessed a few coins. He looked at it again and discovered the form of a cross set in small diamonds. Was it not abominable to use such an emblem in such a place? But Honoria sanctioned it, and even seemed to require it. Her will was irresistible.

He descended to the street, and after striding but a few hundred paces, found himself standing before the dark entrance to the noted establishment, which no law could suppress, and no resolution withstand. Walter recollected the word which had been given him, and repeated it at the door. He was admitted, and conducted through a long and dimly lighted passage. Then a door on the right was thrown open, and he stood within a brilliantly illuminated saloon, where the tables were piled with gold, and hundreds were watching with eager interest the turning of the cards which announced their success or disaster. He paused for a moment, and calmly surveyed the scene. Among the company he recognized faces he had seen in the halls of Congress, a member of the Cabinet, several resident foreign ministers with numerous attaches, and a score of comptrollers, auditors, clerks and messengers.

Recollecting his instructions, the young man approached the table at the farthest end of the saloon, and exhibited the ring. At the sight of it there was some commotion among the keepers of the table, and a mysterious deference was manifested in their dealings with him. The sum he [illegible] was given him, and every turn of the cards announced him a winner, but it was impossible to excite any emotions of [illegible] in his breast. The prospect of large gains was certainly inviting; and he could have no means of conjecturing to what extent he might rely upon the favors of fortune. Nevertheless

be turned away with a very moderate accumulation, bearing the redeemed ring along with him.

Returned to his lodgings, he counted his gains, and was astonished to find he possessed, after deducting the amount of his landlord's bill, precisely the sum he had counted on the same table the first night of his arrival in the city. It was a most extraordinary coincidence, and bootless was every attempt to find its solution. He repaired immediately to the office below and settled the bill. Whether it was the unexpected sight of the money, or whether there had really been a misconception of the proprietor's instructions, the clerk declared the bill had been presented through mistake, and that it might remain unpaid, if Mr. Winkle desired it, until the end of the month. Walter did not desire it, and hence it was paid. But many apologies were uttered.

After a troubled sleep, during which Honoria seemed to guide his steps through many perilous paths, but only to encounter new difficulties and dangers, Walter arose with a half-formed resolution to tear asunder the meshes which confined him, and return to his mother and the faithful Virginia. Once more only would he apply at the Department; after that, if his appointment were again postponed indefinitely, he would abandon the pursuit, and seek some less equivocal means of support.

In the forenoon he obtained an interview with Honoria in her private parlor. She was most elegantly dressed, and said she had been expecting him.

"I desire merely to return this ring," said Walter.

"Yes," said she, smiling, "I must receive it back; but I did not think you would part with it so readily. I had hoped it possessed some talismanic virtues."

"It has performed its mission faithfully. I obeyed your instructions, and have now a replenished purse. But I cannot touch the money without experiencing a thrill of horror."

"Horror? Why?"

"The ring has restored the sum, *exactly*, that I counted on my table the day of my arrival in the city."

"That does seem to be a singular circumstance. Perhaps some one, unregarded at the time, saw you count the money."

"An Irishman may have come in to stir the fire, or a maid to sweep the hearth, and they might have heard me name the sum; but who could tell what would be the amount of my

landlord's bill, or the sum total of my expenditures in my rambles about town? It was not the work of chance. Neither was it a natural sensation which the exhibition of it produced at the gaming table."

"You will at least be convinced that a Providence watches over and protects you."

"I cannot avoid mistrusting that Providence will at last consign me to a *hell* for relief."

"Mercy on us! Do not use profanity. There are many things now incomprehensible to you which may be explained hereafter. But your purse is replenished, and you will not be unhappy from the fear of duns."

"I shall, I think, leave the city, to-day."

"No! Oh no! Do not for my sake—I mean for your own. Let me aid you. They say I am omnipotent with the predominant powers."

"I will go once more to the Department. But they will not any longer trifle with me. I have neglected my duty, may be, and fear I have offended——"

"Who have you offended?"

"No matter."

"I know. I learned this morning from one who passed through Babbleton yesterday, that Col. Oakley's [illegible] elected senator on the Lundredth ballot. You take well to keep well posted in such matters. And it was the [illegible] vote of the Babbleton representative which finally [illegible] to speak, that gave the victory."

"I am rejoiced to hear it."

"I then inquired about the colonel's family, and learned that his only daughter, and only child, is receiving the addresses of the son of a rich banker."

"You incorrigible [illegible]!" said Winkle, [illegible] "Studies in addressing Virginia!"

"Nay, if you must have been in error. But [illegible] "Which should I [illegible] Lucy, or the subject? Why should I [illegible] Lucy, or [illegible] others. I [illegible] Pendleton, and I desire you [illegible] ways [illegible] seek an interview with the [illegible] I [illegible] time to hear from the White House [illegible] my petition be destined to have any effect. Farewell, sir. I did think I might have the pleasure of your

attendance at the capital, after your return from the department. But you seem to be in no complying humor. I am sure I hope the information respecting the new senator's daughter was ill founded."

"Pardon me, Honoria. If it can afford you pleasure, rely upon it, I will go through flames to attend you."

Walter withdrew and strode slowly along the avenue. He was soon overtaken and passed by Honoria's messenger. When he arrived at the Department, he sought a chair in the ante-room, then crowded with applicants for the various offices at the disposal of the great man at the head of the Cabinet. But he was soon found by Boozle and conducted into the presence of the secretary, who received him with a smile.

"Sit down, my friend," said the secretary.

"Excuse me," said Walter, dryly, determined no longer to be made a laughing-stock of the tricky officials—"I have but a moment to stay, and this is my final visit. If my fate cannot be decided without further delays, I shall desire to withdraw my application."

"You must not be too hasty, my young friend. Impatience is the evil of youth, and——"

"Pardon me, sir, for interrupting you. But first show me a necessity for it, and I will match my patience against the endurance of the necessity. It is the suspense, the uncertainty, the duplicity ——"

"Well, well—let your doubts have a termination from this hour. Here is a note from the President, demanding an immediate transmission to him of your name. He had forgotten whether it was William or Walter. You may be the bearer of it since it belongs to you."

"With pleasure, in the commission——"

"Commissions are not sent to the Senate. It would be a waste of stationery where they did not advise and consent to the appointment. Merely the name is sent in by the President. After you are confirmed, then will I have the commission delivered to you. The messenger waits. Will you see the President, or——"

"I remember I have an appointment with Mrs ——"

"Honoria? Eh! Boozle, send the note by the messenger. She is a charming woman! And Senator —— is so much infatuated, as he himself admits, with the music of her voice, that his casting vote, on all evenly contested questions,

seems to be completely at her disposal. In that way she may serve you, and you will do well to secure her advocacy. But be careful she does not make a Catholic of you. Mr —— they say, has actually been to mass. Adieu."

Walter hurried back to the hotel with a smile on his [illegible] and exultation in his heart. Honoria's carriage was at the door, although the weather was fine for walking. But she insisted on Walter's riding with her, and they drove a mile beyond the capitol before alighting at it. In the [illegible] the stairs and in the galleries, the beautiful creature [illegible] the tributes of all classes and sexes, for she was now at the summit of her power; and whatever might have been [illegible] thought by the envious or the considerate, no one ventured to breathe a syllable of detraction. The value of her favor had been experienced by thousands, and the effects of her hostility had been tested by not a few. The marvel was, that Walter, whose appointment had been unofficially announced had not yet passed the Senate.

That day the Senate adjourned at an earlier hour than usual and upon the motion of Honoria's admirer. One of the senators opposed to the motion, jocosely attributed the mover's impatience, to the fact, that a certain divinity presided in the gallery at the other end of the capitol.

Walter relinquished his charge when the gallant old gentleman approached, after congratulating him upon the [illegible] of the [illegible] of the preceding evening. The senator [illegible] that it was truly an achievement for any public man [illegible] entirely the foul stains of ink.

The same evening Walter was surprised by the delivery into his hand of a formidable envelope, which at first [illegible] to be his long hoped for commission. But the B[illegible] [illegible] upon it he was soon undeceived, and the [illegible] of his heart were suddenly repressed.

H[illegible] the envelope, and some twenty letters [illegible] Virginia fell upon the table. The [illegible] [illegible] What could it mean. He [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] deem that [illegible] [illegible] to have the whole volume of his [illegible] [illegible] labors thrust back upon him.

On the blank page of one of the letters he found the following lines traced in pencil marks —"Henceforth I am

to be a stranger to the writer of these letters. One who is so oblivious of his pledges will be relieved, rather than pained at this absolution, which is meant to be complete and irrevocable. Irrevocable, because when he shall prove false to the captivating Honoria, he may attempt to become reconciled to the one who was the first to listen to his declarations. V. O."

"The deuce!" cried Walter, starting up and traversing the room rapidly backwards and forwards, while his temples burned and his thoughts boiled in inextricable confusion. "How has she heard any thing in relation to my intimacy with Honoria? And what has she heard? Some infernal lie! And at a time, too, when she is entangling that puppy Snobson—the son of a snob! What have I done? From the President down to the deputy postmaster, all are striving for the smiles of Honoria. She is the most beautiful—the most intelligent—the most—but she's a married woman, and never was worth the twentieth part of Virginia! I have been a fool—and Virginia's a fool to listen to such slanders! And to send my letters back on account of a little innocent flirtation with a married woman! I *won't* explain any thing! If she can't ascertain my meaning, and justify my conduct without assistance, she may expire in ignorance. But if Snobson comes here dangling after her, I'll kick him into the middle of the avenue! If we are to be strangers when we meet, she shall at least behold me with the finest woman in the city leaning on my arm!"

A note from Honoria was brought in by a demure Irish girl. Walter glanced at it hastily, and immediately followed the messenger into Honoria's private parlor, where he found the lady sitting alone. She pointed to an ottoman at her side, and Walter threw himself on it.

"You seem disturbed in mind," said she.

"I have cause to be. Mr. —— informs me that my name has not yet been sent in to the Senate and I hear from home——"

"What?"

"No matter. It is a private affair."

"We are in private. I am your friend, and, you know, interested in your affairs."

"I believe so, truly, and more extensively than you are aware of!"

"I do not understand you."

"I do not understand it myself. Your ring replenished my purse: your note to the President caused him to write my name, and perhaps your old Senator may confirm my nomination, if it should really be made. Your friendship has lost me my love—the love of Miss Oakdale, and I do not see how I am to be compensated for that. You should have offered me to depart without my commission, as I shall probably be compelled to do yet."

"Lost your love! Why do you think so?"

"She has returned my letters. She says we are to be strangers when we meet, and she will be here soon."

"She will be reconciled, when she sees you avoid my company."

"Then she shall look in vain, unless you repulse me. She has acted foolishly, and ought to suffer for it—or rather undergo the penalty of making amends."

"I will not avoid you. I think you are right. I learn Mr. Oakdale and his daughter will be here to night."

"How? At this hotel?"

"No. At a private boarding-house. Will your heart not fail you?"

"It never did yet. I think not."

"We'll soon see. But here is company."

Several gentlemen entered, and among them the editor of the administration journal. Walter withdrew, returning coldly the salutations of the visitors. He thought it strange that people of all parties should be seeking admission to Hibernia, utterly forgetting that he belonged to an order avowedly hostile to the political advancement of Roman Catholics. Then he thought the last number of the American paper was somewhat softened in its tone in regard to the religion of the papists, admitting that there might be *angels* of that faith, against which war was not to be waged. But its thunders were rekindled against the temporal power of the Vatican as exercised in Catholic countries, and against the party of the President, whose proclivities seemed to point towards the Catholic vote in the United States.

The next day, Walter waited on the President, and was admitted by the doorkeeper, who supposed that any one on terms of intimacy with the lady for whose smiles all the magnates were striving, should not be kept waiting at the door of the Executive palace.

The President was in an ill humor at something he had seen in the papers, but strove to receive the young man kindly. He said he had not sent in the nomination, for the reason that a great many appointments remained unacted on before the Senate and they were taken up according to their dates. It would be useless to crowd the tables with new names, while the old ones had not received attention. And he exhorted his young friend to have patience. His turn would come. If any thing occurred to frustrate his intention, it would be announced to him, &c. Walter bowed, and retired in silence.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WALTER'S DIPLOMACY IN PRISON.

WALTER determined not to be importunate. He had obtained many promises from the men in power—and if they had the slightest regard for their honor, he could not be much longer kept in suspense. For several days he did nothing but attend Honoria, who seemed to demand more of his time than ever, and to exert her blandishments to banish the idea he entertained of leaving the city, in the event of a disappointment.

The first intimation that Walter had of the arrival of Colonel Oakdale and Virginia, was from the newly-elected senator himself. He was promenading along the avenue in company with Honoria, when a carriage drove slowly by, from which he heard his own name uttered, and the next moment the colonel's head was thrust out of the window.

"How are you, Walter, my boy?" cried the colonel. "I am sent for by the President, and will know why your name has not been laid before the Senate. Why don't you come and see us? We have been here two days. I would have been in my seat last week, but I could not leave that flock of partridges, in the old stubble field. Remember, mum's the word about the woodcock! What are you hiding for, Virginia? Come and see us, Walter. I have a great deal to tell you. Good day. Now drive rapidly, Jarvie!" The next moment

the horses were flying along the avenue, and Walter did not have an opportunity to utter a word in reply.

"That was Virginia," said Honoria.

"No. It was Colonel Oakdale," said Walter.

"I saw a green bonnet, and a beautiful little nose."

"Then it *was* Virginia! I thought I heard him mention her name. And she would not speak to me!"

"Her father did not give her an opportunity. What a pity!"

"Why does she treat me thus? What have I done to deserve it?"

"You have offended her, by your attentions to me. You seem distressed."

"I am melancholy. Has *she* not been attended to by that son of a snob?"

"Oh, I suppose so! And are you not angry with her for it?"

"Certainly not. But I will break his bones if he——— Pshaw! nonsense! I will see her to-day, or ——"

"What?"

"Go home, and become a candidate for Congress at the next election. And I will beat Plastic. Then the President and his secretary shall hear my thunder!"

"You frighten me! Perhaps your nomination will be decided to-day. Then you could not leave immediately. And when you do leave, my old friend ——— will, I think, rejoice!"

"Do you know he is *my* friend? He pledged me his word this very morning, that he would vote for me even if I were to avow myself an American, and a protestant. Think of that, ye foreigners and papists!"

"I shall have to torture him! But here we are in front of the hotel, and there is my senator to receive me from your hands."

Walter strode away, and walked in solitude an hour on the common. Returning, he met one of the carriers of the government newspaper, whom he had seen deliver the paper at the hotel. From him he learned that the sheet was left at Mrs. Z.'s, on F street, for the Honorable Mr. Oakdale, and thither he repaired, supposing Virginia might have been put down there by her father, or that they might have had time to return from the presidential mansion.

Walter rang, and asked the boy for Colonel Oakdale.

"He has just left for the capitol. He merely stopped a moment on his return from the President's."

"Is Miss Oakdale in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Give her that card, and say I should be happy to see her."

The boy disappeared, but returned in a few moments after with an altered countenance.

"She says she is indisposed, sir—not ill, but——"

"What?" demanded Walter.

"I am sure I do not know, sir; but she ordered me to return the card."

Walter turned away abruptly in a whirl of contending passions, and never paused until he sat down at the table in his room. He wrote a most impassioned letter to Virginia, imploring her to inform him what it was in his conduct which had offended her. He declared most solemnly that his object and purpose in cultivating the friendship of Mrs. Fimble—he did not write Honoria—was solely to secure her co-operation in obtaining his appointment, and—he confessed it—to gratify his vanity in monopolizing as much of her attention as possible in public, because the most distinguished men in the Union were competing for her smiles. Nothing more, as heaven was his witness! And he adjured Virginia to re-consider her decision, and grant him an interview, when he pledged himself to explain every thing to her satisfaction. He likewise reminded her of his innocence when censured on a former occasion, and declared, if she would only hear him in his defence, he would again be vindicated in her estimation.

This letter he dispatched immediately, and directed the servant to wait for an answer. He then joined Honoria in her private parlor, where there were several senators and their wives and daughters engaged in a lively conversation.

"Have you seen her?" asked Honoria, in a low tone, when one of the ladies sat down to the piano.

"No—but I think I will, soon."

"I doubt it," said she, in a brief pause of the conversation, which she had the faculty, it was said, of maintaining with half a dozen at the same time, and on different subjects.

Presently the messenger made his appearance at the door and sent in a letter to Walter.

"You may break the seal here," said Honoria in a [illegible] speech.

Walter did so, and his own letter—the seal unbroken—[illegible] from the envelope. He stooped down and lifted it from the floor.

"Stooping makes one's blood rush to the face," said Honoria, archly. "And afterwards the reaction produces a paleness."

"I am calm," said Walter.

"And determined?"

"Ay, determined." And seizing the first opportunity [illegible] locked himself up in his room and bestowed extraordinary pains in the adornment of his person. He was determined to appear in hilarious spirits at the secretary's reception [illegible] night, where he would meet with Virginia and Honoria [illegible] would confide in his aged friend, the noble old senator [illegible] would not hesitate to co-operate with him in the execution [illegible] his capricious scheme.

Twice he was startled by messages from Honoria [illegible] seemed to comprehend what had taken place, and [illegible] thought he might perpetrate some desperate deed. He [illegible] her word that so far from being ill, he was merely making [illegible] toilet for the purpose of attending the secretary's [illegible] whither he hoped to be permitted to accompany her in [illegible] ------'s coach.

There were nearly seven hundred people at the secretary's party, all crammed within a private mansion of the ordinary size. But room was made every where for Honoria, who was never separated far from Walter.

"Walter!" cried Col. Oakdale, who, with Virginia hanging on his arm, confronted our hero in the midst of the [illegible] and that too when all eyes were on them, "you are the luckiest of my constituents. Introduce me."

Walter did so.

"Now, Virginia—where is she?" she had escaped and taken refuge with the secretary's lady, who perceived her embarrassment and came to her relief. "Well, my young gentleman, continued the colonel, if you do not [illegible] with your good fortune and address, I am [illegible] I congratulate you with all my heart."

"I thank you, sir," said Honoria.

"Why, I have only bowed to you. My speech was ad

dressed to the lucky fellow at your side. But the ladies, somehow, continue to intercept all the compliments. Yet I warn you to beware of the new rival. Do you not see the crowd of adorers at the other end of the room? This young gentleman, if there has been no rupture between them, of which I know nothing ——"

"Know Nothing?" iterated Honoria.

"Come, come, no politics with me. I abhor them. This young gentleman, I say, will soon be bowing among her worshippers, but not to perish there."

"There is a prediction for you," said Honoria to Walter, when the colonel moved away.

"Alas, not to be fulfilled," was the response.

Again, in the counter-currents of promenades Walter confronted Virginia, and endeavored to speak to her, but in vain, for she averted her face and laughed very heartily at some remark of Mr. Ponsonby, the British Secretary of Legation. And indeed almost the entire diplomatic corps seemed to follow the new beauty whithersoever she moved; and a close observer might have detected a slight elongation of the features of Honoria, at the rapid progress of her rival. In every direction she heard the praises of Virginia; and for the first time during the gay season she perceived she was reigning over a divided empire. Nevertheless she was not neglected by the seekers of office, or the bestowers of it. The President himself detained her several minutes, until he could deliver a paragraph of praises; and there were ten or fifteen senators engaged in the gallant enterprise of an attempt to supplant her old beau.

Walter was particularly distinguished by the cordial salutations of the chief executive officer, which he thought might be interpreted as a good augury.

At length Honoria, whether really unwell as she alleged, or conscious of being abandoned by half the multitude for the superior blandishments of the new belle, was to remain an unfathomable secret: but she quietly withdrew, and relinquished the field to her competitor. And she insisted on being accompanied by Walter, who was more active than the aged senator, and might withdraw without incurring the imputation of perpetrating a breach of etiquette. And when he had deposited his charge at the hotel, to avoid a violation of propriety, and to enable his senatorial friend to reach his

lodgings, it was necessary for him to return in the carriage to the secretary's mansion

Enfranchised from the captivating thraldom of H[illegible] Walter promenaded the halls and saloons in quest of V[illegible] He found her—but she would not recognize him. [illegible] who knew her so well, and could read her countenance [illegible] curately, did not fail to perceive that her mind was [illegible] and that her heart was ill at ease, even under the [illegible] flow of Ponsonby's flatteries. And Ponsonby, [illegible] son of an Earl, inspired no fears in his bosom [illegible] but a noble in Great Britain—Winkle a sovereign [illegible]

But Winkle retraced his steps, alone, to his [illegible] Ponsonby conducted to her home the senator's [illegible] ter. And Walter passed an uneasy night in a [illegible] of conjecture, endeavoring in vain to foresee the [illegible] consummation of the drama in which he felt he was [illegible] the principal actors.

The next morning, as usual, he was summoned to [illegible] before Honoria in her parlor She stood beside her [illegible] pale, and a tear glistening in her eye.

"What has happened, Honoria?" demanded Walter gravely, and with some symptoms of impatience.

"Oh, it is outrageous!" said she "They have [illegible] you vilely. Read the paper. But restrain your [illegible]

Walter ran his eye along the editorial column [illegible] the government journals, and was surprised to find his own name at the head of a paragraph, as follows —

"Mr. Walter Winkle.—The public cannot have failed to see this gentleman's name going the rounds of the press in connection with the appointment of a new consular agent at the port of London. Whence the letter writers [illegible] their information, it is not material to inquire. That all appointments really made, first appear in the columns of the administration papers, and Mr W's name not having been transmitted to us, is alone a sufficient contradiction of the [illegible] But we deem it proper to say, that the fact of Mr W [illegible] one of the fraternity of N. A.'s, so generally hostile to the administration, would render it both impolitic for the President to bestow, and, under the circumstances, in our opinion dishonorable in Mr W to receive, any such mark of distinction. It is not, therefore, at all probable his name will be

transmitted to the Senate by the present incumbent of the presidential office."

"I entreat you to restrain any violent passion that may——"

"I am perfectly calm," said Walter smiling. "I am glad the mists have broken away at last, and I can see the land.—I rejoice at it. I will be guilty of no such extravagance as the outburst of violent passion you seem to have anticipated. The man of imperturbable deliberation is the most dangerous—and I feel that they have roused an enemy whose resources they have had no means of correctly estimating. Do you know that one of the creatures of the Executive once intimated that I might render a service to the administration by fighting a duel with the editor of the American journal? I thank him for that word!"

"I did not suggest it—I did not sanction it."

"No one could suppose such a thing, Honoria. But in that case there was no provocation. In this——"

"There is insult and injury! It cannot be denied—it cannot be concealed!"

"True—very true. You will not betray me, Honoria? You will grant this my earnest request, that you will not thwart my just intention to demand satisfaction? You are silent. Why should you interfere? All hope of my appointment is at an end. The paragraph was written at the White House. This business with the editor alone detains me in the District—and we may never meet again. As my last request, I ask that you will not interfere."

"I will not."

"I thank you. Remain at home to-day."

"I will."

Walter withdrew to his chamber, and wrote as follows to the editor:

"Sir:—The article in your paper in reference to myself, being evidently prepared with no design of future explanation and amicable adjustment, there is no other alternative left me but to demand the satisfaction which every gentleman has a right to require of the one who has injured him. This it is my intention to do, as soon as I arrive at Bladensburg, which will be as quickly as the fleetest horses I can procure may transport me thither; and whither you will doubtless likewise repair without delay."

This note was despatched by one of the servants of the hotel to the office of the editor, with directions to wait for an answer. Walter intended to escape from the District before consulting any friend, or even procuring weapons, relying upon the chances of obtaining them after passing beyond the limits of the jurisdiction of the authorities of the District.

But when he was in consultation with the book-keeper of the hotel, in reference to a carriage, the messenger who had been sent to the printing office returned, accompanied by two officers of the marshal, who immediately arrested our hero.

"You pronounce me your prisoner," said Walter. "I have no means of resistance, and must submit. But may I not ask upon whose motion or information you proceed?"

"Certainly. The messenger placed the note in the hands of the marshal himself."

"Michael!" said Walter, "why did you act thus?"

"Sure I wouldn't say so handsome a gintleman going out with nasty pistols to be shot!"

"Enough, sir! Gentlemen, do your duty: but beware you do not transcend it."

"We know the law, sir. You must come with us to the magistrate's office."

And Walter was not ignorant of the law, nor in doubt as to his future course of conduct. He therefore asked and obtained permission to spend a short time in his own chamber, attended by an officer, while he arranged his trunk, as to its removal. He returned to the office of the hotel, paid his bill, and left instructions for his baggage to be sent after him. He then stepped into a hack with the officers, and they were driven to the magistrate's office.

The news of the projected duel and the arrest of one of the parties, soon spread over the city, and was immediately circulated in both houses of Congress. So that before Walter had been many minutes in the office of the magistrate, it was surrounded by a large crowd of people, a majority being his friends—at least they were Native Americans.

The magistrate, before whom the note, which fortunately was not signed, challenge was laid, stated that he had but one course to pursue, and he could not hesitate to perform his duty. The prisoner not having employed counsel, or offered any reasons himself why it should not be supposed it was his purpose to violate the law, it only remained for him to require

a bond with sufficient sureties for the maintenance of the peace during the next six months. He would therefore fix the sum at $5,000.

Many persons volunteered to become Walter's sureties, and among them were Col. Oakdale and the editor of the American journal.

"No, gentlemen," said Walter, firmly. "I thank you; but I must decline your kindness. I believe that the position in which I find myself is the result of a conspiracy. Many things which have occurred to my mind during the last few minutes, induce the conviction that this whole proceeding is in accordance with a premeditated purpose. My name has been used in the papers without any agency on my part, and the notoriety attending my presence in this city, has been entirely the work of others. Those who have been instrumental in bringing me hither, to subserve some purpose of their own, must have anticipated the tenders of my friends to become my securities in a bond to keep the peace. Now, believing, I say, that this whole business is in pursuance of a plot, I am not disposed to co-operate with my enemies in the fulfilment of their objects. They have mistaken their man, and the result may not be precisely such as they anticipated. I will not give bail. I do not desire any friend to be my surety. I will not even promise to maintain the peace, when I meet with any of my enemies."

"Then you will have to go to prison," said the magistrate.

"I did not suppose the prison would have to come to me," replied Walter. But I hope your honor will provide me as comfortable an apartment as may be consistent with duty."

"That must rest with the keeper. I believe he is not hard-hearted. But why you can desire to go there, when there is an opportunity to avoid the incarceration, surpasses my power of conjecture."

"Doubtless it does. If my object were apparent, it would cease to be a counter-plot. But no one, I think, will attribute my conduct to any unworthy motive. I do not seek protection from the assaults of my enemies, else these proceedings, if not extrajudicial, would at least be supererogatory."

Walter bowed to the officers who had conducted him from the hotel, and signified his readiness to repair to the place of confinement. He was driven to prison, and upon the representations of the officers, was accommodated with a comfortable room.

Boozle, who had been present at the office of the magistrate, hastened away to the President to announce the extraordinary turn the affair had taken.

"Gone to prison!" exclaimed the President. "What does he mean?"

"He declined giving his reasons, sir."

"This will never do! It will produce such a commotion in the city, and throughout the country, as no administration can withstand. We shall be condemned! Sent to prison for resenting such an assault in our paper, and after our promises! It will never do! I shall have my southern friends battering at the door. Confound the Jesuits! I hope none of them hear me, however. But this is likely to become a serious matter. Go to the secretary, Boozle, and beg him to come here." Shortly afterwards the secretary made his appearance.

"Ah! This is a bad business of Winkle's," said the President. "It would have been better to have had him disposed of in the Senate!"

"But he would have been confirmed," said the Secretary. "Our old friend had become so partial to the young fellow that he swore he would vote for him in defiance of every thing."

"Even that would have been preferable; but why was he assailed in the paper?"

"The paragraph was dictated by Mrs. Fimble herself and his arrest was her stratagem. But she never could have foreseen that he would go to prison! She thought no doubt that he would give security, and still walk the streets with her. In short, that she was prolonging his abode in the city, which, I believe, was particularly desired by her."

"There may be something in that; for, instrument of the Jesuits as she is, I doubt whether she could wantonly assail the handsome fellow whom she seems to delight in having continually at her side, without some selfish motive at the bottom of it. Well, I hope you will negotiate me out of the difficulty. You have plenary powers, and she has beauty."

"I will have him out of prison within forty-eight hours, or there is no skill in diplomacy, or virtue in beauty."

"And the latter is a controverted point. Good day, sir."

The secretary drove down to the hotel, and demanded an interview with Honoria, but was denied! She was ill, really ill, and could see no one. He then returned to his office, and

had a long consultation with Boesle, with whom he concerted a plan of liberation.

Meantime the excitement in the city grew very intense. An American was victimized. The son of a late member of Congress, the author of the unique speech against the innovating fanatics, the gallant beau, the chivalrous descendant of a brave officer, was incarcerated in a vile prison. Every man who had seen him was a sympathizer, and the influence of the ladies is never contemptible at the capital.

During the day more than a hundred persons called upon the prisoner to express their concern, and to offer their services in any way he might see proper to command them. But his resolution was not to be shaken, and nothing could induce him to comply with the prescribed forms of enfranchisement.

At night, not less than a dozen sumptuous repasts were sent him, borne by servants in livery which, after appropriating to himself the beautiful bouquets that accompanied them, he distributed among his fellow-prisoners in the other apartments.

He had lights, books, and a comfortable fire, for one of the keepers was an American. But before he had plunged [illegible] into a volume, Col. Oakdale was announced. Walter threw down the book, and grasped the hand of his old friend.

"You seem comfortable here, Walter," said the [illegible] sitting in front of the cheerful fire and [illegible].

"Quite so, colonel. But still it is a prison."

"Yes. And I cannot imagine why you will persist in remaining in it, when you might go forth."

"It is a stroke of my diplomacy, colonel—and you will [illegible] think, in the end, admit it to have been a [illegible]."

"Gad, you have wine here. Who furnishes it? It is good, too," he continued, as he [illegible] a glass.

"It is excellent. I do not know the generous [illegible]. Every hour something of the sort arrives and from [illegible]."

"Flowers, too. They come from some [illegible]. Virginia must know it. But Walter [illegible] a [illegible] headache to-night and couldn't go to the party, and that is the reason I came to spend the evening with you."

"Did she request you to come?" asked the young man quickly.

"No—not exactly. But when I said I was confined to come, she seemed something better."

"And she did not object to it?"

"Object to it? Certainly not! Why do you grasp my arm? Oh, there is some quarrel between you. Make it up, make it up, and leave this place. Then kiss and be friends. Roland is off the track, and you may improve your time. I shall not forbid it. What! tears? Why, what the deuce is the matter with the fellow?"

"I have been a fool. And she was too hasty."

"Of course you have—of course she was. What else could be expected? But I came to tell you of some fine sport I made——"

"I could explain every thing if she would but hear me——"

"Wouldn't she hear you? You know how far it is from the old pear tree to the fence——"

"She would not see me—and she returned my letter."

"I'll talk about that when I'm done. It was under the pear tree. Dash was leaping briskly ahead when he [illegible] the bird. He paused so suddenly that he turned a somerset! But you are not listening—at least not enjoying my tale. I will reserve it for another time. Now what about Virginia?"

"I fear some one has been slandering me."

"Pooh! A fit of jealousy. That's all. And no wonder, for she has seen you gallanting the handsomest woman in the city."

"A lady wishes to see you," said the keeper, who opened the door.

"Glad. I am by no means positive that Virginia's suspicions are groundless," said the colonel.

"Then you may be convinced," said Walter. "I do not know who this lady is, do you, Mr. Keeper?"

"No, sir; she is veiled."

"Come to my little closet of a bed room, colonel, where you can see and hear every thing that passes. I am not afraid of any thing being said or done, which Virginia herself might not hear and see. Now admit the lady."

She was ushered in by the keeper, who closed the door after her. Walter, although he was just then slightly flustered with the excellent wine that had been sent him, stood perfectly still and gazed in silence at his visitor.

"You do not know me!" said the lady, sinking into the chair which the colonel had occupied.

"I think I know that voice," said Walter, "but I will not be positive. The room is warm; will you not remove your cloak and veil?"

"I will!" said she, throwing them off and standing before our hero, but with no trace of levity on her face.

"Honoria!" exclaimed Walter. "Is it possible?"

"It is possible—it was inevitable!" said she, again sinking upon the chair. "I have come to make a confession—to crave your forgiveness, and to——"

"I am not a father confessor—nevertheless I absolve you. I have thought you exercised some control over my political fortunes, which have been but a series of disasters. If such has been the case, I forgive you. You have but executed the will of others. I had not merited your vengeance."

"No! You had not! And you have conjectured truly, in regard to the will of others. Hear me. I was reared in a convent. I know not where I was born, or who were my parents. But for this purpose—to be the instrument of the Jesuits—was I educated. I have been taught that in serving them, I serve my God. And I have believed it. And they believe that in obtaining power on earth, which they hold and exercise in the service of the one whose name they bear, they but perform a religious duty. But they have been granted the privilege of using *any* means, of exercising *any* power, of violating *any* rule, in the attainment of the great end in view. I need not describe to you what has been already accomplished; for you would hardly credit my statement. Let it suffice that I am made to represent some six hundred thousand votes. That is the secret of my influence with the administration. My beauty, my accomplishments, which have been extolled, are subsidiary to our religious order; and I am directed to captivate this young man, or to fascinate that old one——"

"And you obey!"

"I *have* obeyed. I knew no other alternative, and had no other desire, until I met with you."

"With me? Honoria, if you really desire to abandon these damnable agents of the Pope—who, although he lives in a cloud of incense, I believe is in the habit of eating garlic at his breakfast—I will render you all the assistance in my power!"

"Thanks, generous, noble Walter! But wait till I have

confessed that it was I who informed the Departm[illegible] being one of the new secret order——"

"You! How in the name of wonder did you fin[illegible]

"We have spies in your councils—Jesuits [illegible] that purpose—with dispensations and indulg[illegible] ting them to swear any thing, and to forswear th[illegible] out criminality. I saw you exchanging the sign[illegible] knew perfectly well. The compact with the party [illegible] is unmitigated hostility to the Native Americans [illegible] of the support of Rome. But to resume—I delay[illegible] in your case. It was not deemed good policy for [illegible] istration, suddenly to break with you and your [illegible] much as you had not, in becoming a Know N[illegible] doned any principle of the party you had [illegible] was known that very many thousands occupied the [illegible] tion in relation to the head of the government. B[illegible] tor of the American paper, while protesting he w[illegible] sail our religion, nor the spiritual ascendency [illegible] nor the power of angels, seemed to redoubl[illegible] the administration. It was then decided an [illegible] necessary to check the boldness of the order repre[illegible] the paper, and hence the attack in the Administrat[illegible] which, in reality, was never seen by the editor [illegible] publication. It was written by me——"

"By *you*, Honoria?"

"It was. It was my intention after as many [illegible] would bear with, to have had your name sent [illegible] and there hung up in suspense, or promptly rejected. [illegible] had in the mean time won the friendship of the [illegible] gentleman who wields the casting vote, and it was [illegible] you would be confirmed. I knew you would [illegible] procrastination on the part of the President, and [illegible] would abandon the pursuit and leave the city. It was [illegible] to keep you here. I knew you would [illegible] of the editor of the paper in which [illegible] and I knew if you [illegible] the result of the meeting you w[illegible] Washington. Therefore the marshal was [illegible] But I did not suppose [illegible] have foreseen that you would consent to be [illegible] vile prison! The thought was intolerable anguish to me—and I resolved to appear before you and make——"

"I forgive you, Honoria," said Walter; "but I should never have deemed it possible for one of your sensibility and delicacy to act so deceptive a part."

"And who was the victim? I—I! *I* was deceived, when I supposed my part could be played with impunity. Walter, if you have lost the office, I have lost my heart! I love you—you only!"

"You forget your husband, madam!" said Walter, gazing coldly at the beautiful woman who had thrown herself upon his breast.

"I have no husband! It was a pious fraud of Father Xavier. Mr. Fimble is a British priest. He has, it is true, proposed abandoning the order, if I will really marry him. But my heart is yours alone. Do not repulse me—or I am lost! For you I will violate my sacred obligation, brave every danger, abandon the Church itself, and forfeit my salvation——"

"No! No, Honoria!"

"Do not deny me! Do not say no! Let us fly! I have jewels worth immense sums. We can find some secluded spot in the mountains, or on the vast untrodden plains, where we can dwell in security——"

"Enough, Honoria! It is impossible. I love another. Leave me."

"No—oh, no! I will see the President, and you shall abandon this place. I brought you hither—I will lead you hence——"

"Indeed you will not. There exists but one being who can release me. You are not that individual. I have been the victim of intrigue—henceforth I will endeavor to play a more skilful part. I have my stratagem, and most patiently await the issue. Answer me this, Honoria: Have you not contributed to produce the estrangement of Virginia?"

"She had anonymous letters. I had been educated in the school of——"

"The abominable Jesuits!"

"But I will fly with you and——"

"You will do no such thing! Leave me, Honoria. I will not betray you—but leave me. Abandon the wicked order to which you belong——"

"Impossible—without you! You know not the force of education—of their power over their members——"

"Where is their power over you, since you are willing to desert them?"

"For you, you alone! Without you I must return to them, and obey in all things!"

"And with me, I suspect it would be pretty much the same thing. Go! and when you next attempt to sow the seeds of dissension between honest lovers, remember how ineffectual were your arts in my case. Your carriage awaits you. I will conduct you to it." Saying this, Walter rang for the keeper; and when the door was thrown open, forgetful of his loss of liberty, our hero would have accompanied the unresisting woman into the street, had he not been gently thrust back by the keeper. He bowed, and returned to his chair, as the disappointed visitor departed.

"Hang me, if you are not the most extraordinary young man that ever drew the breath of life!" said the colonel. "When I tell Virginia what I have witnessed, if she don't forgive you, I'll disinherit her! But who did you allude to when you said there was but one who could release you?"

"I meant Virginia. I will confess any thing to you, colonel; I know you will keep my secret, even from Virginia, if you cannot be my confederate. You know I could have avoided this confinement. My object in coming hither was to excite the sympathy of Virginia."

"Ha! ha! ha! good! I'll help you! I cannot make her marry you against her will—but you have my consent. And I will aid you in effecting a reconciliation. I will describe to her your solitary abode—your interview with her rival—the hundreds of visitors, the wine, the flowers——"

"For heaven's sake, colonel, don't mention them! Let her suppose I am groaning in a damp dungeon among spiders and rats, and living on crusts and water."

"I should not have thought of that! You are right. Pity is a more powerful feeling with the sex than even the desire of excelling in the number of their conquests. But I must describe your interview with that angelic Jesuitical *image*."

"And do not forget what she said about the anonymous letters. I know not the nature of their contents—but I attribute Virginia's displeasure to them."

"I will forget nothing that will do you good, my brave fellow, if I can help it. But I have something to remember for myself, and you know my ideas can travel but in one

direction at a time. So you must not be too impatient if there is some little delay in your business."

"Tell her colonel, that I have made up my mind to perish here. That since I have incurred her displeasure there remains nothing else in the world I can desire to live *for*. Between us, however, I have written my mother every thing, including my purpose on coming hither."

"I'll see if am to be sold to the infernal Jesuits!" continued the incensed senator.

"Tell her, colonel, the unwholesome atmosphere *of* my prison, combined with the depressing consciousness *of* having *for ever*—italicize that word, colonel—*forfeited* her good opinion, will soon make an end of me."

"My constituent—the son of my old friend Winkle—and because the foreigners have some 600,000 votes——"

"Recollect, colonel, how promptly I rejected the proposal *of* Honoria, and that I vowed my eternal constancy to Virginia."

"And, merely because he was an American! I am an American myself—and would these papal devils have us forfeit our birthright, or disavow our country, and become the servile instruments of the arrogant prince of Rome?"

"But, you *will* forget *me*, I fear, colonel."

"Forget *you!* nonsense! I will go to the President immediately, and I will shout in his ear, that *I*, too, am an American—and that Americans shall rule America! Good night, Walter. Be comfortable, and rely upon me." And he departed hastily, as if impelled by the one purpose of confronting the President, and avowing his nativity.

Walter, after quaffing another glass of the delicious wine, which had been sent him by his unknown friends, resumed his book, which, it may as well be owned, was "Smollet's Peregrine Pickle," which the keeper had loaned him.

He had not been thus engaged many minutes, before the keeper again appeared, bearing in his hand a finely enamelled card.

"Boozle!" said Walter, with a sneer. "But let him come in."

Boozle made his appearance with a sympathising smile, but with astonished glances at the evidences of luxurious living by which the prisoner was surrounded.

"I am glad you seem comfortable!" said he. "I was fearful you might be suffering."

"Suffering! my sufferings were all over when I [illegible] the clutches of the secretary and our noble President [illegible] Boozle, help yourself. Here are cakes, and there the [illegible] juice of the grape. I drank with you at the secretary [illegible] and you must drink with me here. This is my [illegible]

"I will drink your health with a great [illegible] It is excellent! But, Winkle, nothing [illegible] loss of liberty. I am astonished that you should [illegible] coming hither."

"I don't doubt it, Boozle. Be candid, and tell me if [illegible] President himself is not likewise astonished?"

"He is. And more than that, much annoyed. He [illegible] received many indignant letters, and has been [illegible] listen to some rather threatening speeches, from [illegible] members of Congress."

"Did you see Colonel Oakdale?"

"He was driving furiously towards the White House a few minutes ago."

"Well, you have sown the wind, you know the rest."

"But, without having to *tip* any one, you may yet [illegible] This last move of yours has taken every body by [illegible] and the high powers are prepared to treat on your own terms."

"I have no terms to propose."

"If you will sign a pledge to support the administration your name will be sent in to-morrow, and you will be [illegible] firmed immediately. I am authorized to say so."

"You remember the words uttered in the French Chamber of Deputies, when the royal family offered terms to the [illegible] censed revolutionists. It is too late!"

"Do you mean that you will not accept the office?"

"I do. The only position I now court is Plastic[illegible] I made him what he is, and I can unmake him. I want [illegible] from the administration."

"But you must not remain here. The President [illegible] [illegible]"

"He [illegible] the appointment [illegible] [illegible] Senate. And I would [illegible] press, setting forth the history of [illegible] [illegible] showing that the government [illegible] in the [illegible] the miserable Jesuits—whose entire vote is represented here by a woman!"

"She deserves your enmity, but——"

"I shall not say one word in her disparagement. She is a woman, and a most beautiful one; eh, Boozle?"

"That is incontrovertible. But she has never had a smile for me. And you will not accept the office? That is most extraordinary!"

"I believe it is, truly. For the post is said to be worth not less than five thousand dollars."

"There must be some great inducement—some equivalent, which has not been discovered by the astute secretary——"

"To induce me to decline such an appointment ——"

"And resolve to remain in prison!"

"There must be—there is—but all the mere diplomatists in creation could never find it out. And I won't tell what it is. So you see your mission is not likely to be crowned with success. I will say, however, that there is one person—one only—who can lead me hence—who *must* release me, if ever I regain my liberty—and neither the President, nor the secretary——"

"Nor Honoria?"

"Nor Honoria is that person!"

"Then I cannot conjecture who you mean. But I think you are mistaken. You must not remain here."

"*Must* not?"

"Must not. The President will order your release—will pardon——"

"Tell him if he does I'll cane him! I have an invincible respect for the *President*, but none whatever for the *man*. And when I am punishing the individual, I will make a protestation of not assaulting the office. Tell him, he is warned not to meddle further in my affairs. I will not promise to keep the peace, if they discharge me before I am ready to come out ——"

"But what can be your motive——"

"That's none of his business, nor yours. I may have a little game of my own to play—a private matter, with which you can have no concern, and which I don't choose to explain to any one. The President did not send me hither, nor did he desire it. That much I will admit. Let him say so in his organ. When I am ready to come forth, I will find the requisite sureties. But no *pardon*. That is suggestive of antecedent guilt. I have committed no crime. If he pardons

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WALTER RECEIVES INTELLIGENCE FROM HO
DIPLOMACY QUITE PROSPEROU

WALTER never slept more soundly, or enjoy
dreams, than he did in prison. And he
appetite for breakfast, which was damaged
contents of the letters and papers brought i

The first letter he tore open, was from
informed him of the occurrences in New
which, she admitted, she had intended to keep
present, but was forestalled by the papers, e
sent him. How the reporters ascertained sh
the Countess of Hilton, she was unable to
she owned, she could not contradict it! I
great fears, her dear brother might neve
arrangement, and would regard the fact of
foreigner, an insuperable obstacle. She
timated as much to the earl; but he had un
that such a consummation of his wishes, wou
ment of Walter's rule, inasmuch as he w
exercise the rights of suffrage; and instea

Walter found a whole column in one of the papers devoted to a description of the company at Mrs. Laurel's party, and embracing the most minute details of the dress of the Countess, as well as the appearance of the Earl, who was designated as a most unassuming, well-bred young man. Lucy, herself, seemed to have attracted a large share of the reporter's attention; and of course there was enough said in her praise to have turned the heads of all the Arums and Crudles in the world. The A.'s and C.'s, however, were duly mentioned, for they were reported to be very rich, and beautiful, and all that. No allusion whatever was made to the duel of Col. Ball. Even the fact of his presence on the occasion of the great reception, was entirely suppressed.

There was also a letter from Sergeant Blore. He urged Walter to return as soon as possible, that he might take his final leave of his uncle, who was sinking by inches into the grave under the tortures of Griselda. He said the commander was dying of a sort of torpor, brought on, he thought, by wearing damp undershirts, which his wife had regularly sprinkled for that purpose. She had lately gone to mass, and was turning Roman Catholic. "We thought she was religious enough before," said the sergeant; "but she is worse now, and we are put upon half rations every Friday! No meat—no grog! And she's made your uncle make a new will, and sign it. Bawson says it makes no odds, as he has another for your benefit, ready cut and dried, which your uncle has promised to sign before he kicks the bucket. The lawyer says the last will is the one that will win the battle. Your uncle says he will give him the wink when he feels himself going, so that it can be produced and signed. But he wants to see you and Lucy, before he sets out on the final campaign. There is no hope for him. He says so himself. And a sure sign of it is the presence of a dark, tall, gaunt priest, named Xavier, or Zebra, or something of the sort. After this business is over, Bawson is going to blow Roland sky high, and play the devil with him. Mrs. E. attempted to storm the fort once, but my guns were in readiness, and double-shotted. I don't like to venture in town to get your mother to send the news—so I send this to the office by Bill Dizzle. Come, soon,—your uncle can't hold out much longer—but he says he'll be—— if that Jesuitess shall have his money. And when the priest holds up his black cross before him, he tells him to go and

hold it up before the Turks, instead of making the Fr[illegible] people fight for the infidel Arabs. Oh, Walter—[illegible] eloquent on that subject, and says, if he had his w[illegible] M[illegible] hometans should be driven out of Europe, and that [illegible] land should be put in cultivation, and manured with [illegible] of the Moslems, instead of wasting Christian [illegible] under the new moon flag of the barbarians. No [illegible] come soon. Your faithful friend, Th[illegible]

There was likewise a note from Honoria, imp[illegible] W[illegible] not to divulge her secret, unless he desired to [illegible] death. That he threw into the fire, and then [illegible] the papers from Philadelphia and Baltimore [illegible] that his imprisonment had been duly chronicled [illegible] the letter writers said he was confined in prison [illegible] could not give security for his good behavior, [illegible] would not, from prudential motives, as the prison wall[illegible] what he most desired, viz., protection from assault [illegible] again, denying the correctness of the rest, int[illegible] voluntarily remained a captive for some purpose [illegible] profound mystery to the outsiders. But that the Pr[illegible] had proffered to release him, and also to confer [illegible] office he had applied for, and both of which [illegible] jected. It was stated, however, that he had [illegible] visitors at his prison as the President had at [illegible] the sympathies of the ladies were very generally [illegible] his behalf.

Thus Walter perceived he was rapidly [illegible] character, and his resolution not to relinquish the [illegible] of his [illegible] without reaping some decided [illegible] his incarceration with eclat, was more [illegible]

During the [illegible] drove up to the [illegible] a great [illegible]

"[illegible] Walter, [illegible] I am [illegible] I shall [illegible] I'll call [illegible] the [illegible] I'm in the opposition [illegible]

"Why, what's the matter [illegible]

"I have just listened to the whole program me at the Pr[illegible]

ident's. They construed my silence into an acquiescence, and made most unreserved and iniquitous revelations. That woman spoke truly! They are bargaining with the foreigners! Henceforth I am in the opposition!"

"But, colonel, I hope you will not make any sacrifices on my account!"

"You shall have Virginia! You shall be revenged. Only be composed and comfortable."

"But, sir, you have not told me what she——"

"Another time, Walter; I'm in great haste now."

"One moment, colonel! you didn't finish telling about the shot near the pear-tree."

"Oh, true!" said the colonel, sitting down. "Dash went heels over head. I could see nothing. The dog wouldn't move. I walked all around. No bird. Then I approached the dog in front, and at last espied the partridge lying in the sunken print of a horse's hoof, and not four feet from the dog's nose. I stood a long time—but he did not seem willing to rise. So I stepped forward and kicked him up. I was afraid of tearing him to pieces; and waited until he was as far as the fence, before I fired. Then I saw no more of him; but Dash kept looking straight up in the air, while I looked like a fool. Presently down came the bird on my head—on my head, sir, knocking my hat over my eyes. I had shot him in the head, and he had sailed up perpendicularly until quite dead."

"Capital! But, colonel, pray tell me what took place last night after you left me"

"I went home. Virginia did not open her lips, yet she begged most eloquently to be informed of your condition, and so forth. She was ever at my side, with her head laid against my shoulder, and her ear open. She was very affectionate. I knew what she meant, and was just going to tell her every thing, when I received a note from the Secretary of State, asking me to meet him at the house of the Secretary of the Treasury. I went thither, and beheld a great party. The beautiful Honoria was present. Tell me, you rogue, if your conduct was not circumscribed by the consciousness of my presence?"

"I own I did not forget you were a witness, colonel."

"I thought so—for flesh and blood——"

"But, sir, *she* did not know it."

"Very true—and you made a final disposition of her.

Virginia will love you now more than ever. She was at the Secretary's—I mean this Jesuit woman, and she was the gayest person there, angling for the Native American editor who was there too. I went with the secretary to see the President. We were joined by one Boozle, who whispered something, and then the President said he was unwell and begged us to call in the morning. This morning they lifted the curtain, and exposed all their measures, and purposes. A very ugly picture, sir! I denounced the whole programme. Be patient. When I have declared war against them I will return and get you out of prison. But I learn the penalty in the bond is to be doubled, on the suggestion of that Boozle—that is $10,000, instead of $5,000. No matter, you shall come out."

"No colonel—not until Virginia says so—and, moreover until she is reconciled——"

"I forgot that! But she *shall* be satisfied. I will see her before I return. Good morning."

Walter's next visitor was his old college friend, George Parke.

"Hallo, old fellow!" cried Parke, running up to our hero and shaking him heartily by the hand. I was on my way home, having quarrelled with our professor on political economy, when I chanced to see your affair in a paper. Now I shall stay until you are out of this scrape. I am rich now, Walter, and owe you money. Not a word. I learned from the keeper where the magistrate's office is. I'll get you out in an hour, and after that we'll see if we can't contrive to have a shot at the editor."

"No, George. You shall do no such thing. To be candid with you, I remain here very willingly, and with a design—which I will explain. Virginia is in the city, and is offended with me. I have been slandered. You know how powerfully one's sufferings in a prison will work upon the sympathies of a tender-hearted girl. You understand? She alone must release me."

"I see! A capital idea! But you don't seem to be suffering much."

"No. But she is not to know how comfortable I am. Sit down and tell me the particulas of your quarrel."

"I had passed my examination, and thought my diploma secured. Mr. —— was the last questioner. I satisfied him

and was in high spirits, which he observed, and he interrogated me as to the cause of it. I told him. My mother had just sent me a power of attorney to draw on her agent in New York for the proceeds of our crop of cotton shipped from that port. It amounted to $21,000! Mr. —— then began to denounce our Southern institutions, and of course I was not just then inclined to agree with him. He fired a broadside of his European dogmas at my country, and I fired back at him. I controverted all his propositions, and we arrived at different results. At length he grew seriously excited, and demanded if that country was not in a higher state of prosperity whose square mile—the exact dimensions of my mother's plantation —was divided among forty small proprietors, and produced a clear revenue of $40,000, than the one whose square mile had but one proprietor and yielded only $20,000. I did not deny that the first country might be theoretically the most prosperous, according to the interests of monarchies; but I insisted upon preferring the whole mile in our own country, and most vehemently asserted that the sole proprietor of the mile was in a better condition than each of the forty. He grew furious—I remained firm. He insulted me, and I cursed him. Of course I got no diploma—as you got no commission. But who have we here?"

The keeper opened the door and said there was a queer sort of a noisy fellow without, who demanded admission to Walter's room.

"Did he come in a carriage?" asked Walter.

"Yes. In the Black Maria—the prison carriage. He was taken up for disturbing the peace."

"And he says he knows me?"

"Yes. And he knows Shakspeare too, for he quotes him by the page."

"Then admit him!"

"Yes," said Parke, "the man who quotes Shakspeare from inclination is fit associate for the immortals."

The singular individual was pushed through the door. He stood in silent abstraction, while the young men scrutinized his exterior. He was covered with stains of mud, as if he had been lying in a gutter. His hat was crushed in on one side, and the crown, torn out three fourths of the way round, hung pendant in front. His pantaloons were stuffed in his

boots. His coat was buttoned up to his chin, and his hands were crossed behind him.

"Look up, my friend," said Walter.

"Friend! at that word I lift my eyes!"

"Pollen!" cried both the young men at once, rushing forward and seizing the poet's hands.

"Yes, Pollen the poet. Let me eat—and remove the bottles—before we have any questions." He helped [illegible] without ceremony to the remains of the sumptuous [illegible] left by Walter. "Now," said he, "I will give you [illegible] count of myself. A week ago I was in New York, [illegible] topmost round of the poetical ladder. The Countess [illegible] ton was my patroness, and advanced me money to [illegible] new edition of my works. But I had forgotten [illegible] folio and copyrights were in pledge to the [illegible] Philadelphia for the pitiful sum of $200. I went [illegible] redeem them—but the interest had accumulated to [illegible] geometrical absurdity that it required all my funds [illegible] the smiling rascal. I redeemed them, however.

"Not knowing what else to do, I applied to Mr. B[illegible] pitiful office. He was anxious to accommodate me. [illegible] he appreciated my merits and reverenced my genius. [illegible] his appointments had to be submitted to the secretary [illegible] approval. He advised me to come hither and see [illegible] the Department, and he advanced me the money to defray [illegible] expenses.

"When I arrived at my hotel this morning, the first [illegible] I heard mentioned was yours, Walter. I learned what [illegible] transpired, and I hastened away to the President's [illegible] your discharge. Upon entering the portal, I was thrust [illegible] by an impudent Paddy, who demanded my name and [illegible] I told him I was one of the sovereigns, and that the President was the servant of the people—and I came [illegible] master. He damned me as one of the natives [illegible] [illegible] dragged me out in the rain. I splintered [illegible] [illegible] But that did not move him. I [illegible] [illegible] which he resented. I don't know [illegible] how many times he struck me, nor precisely where [illegible] awoke to consciousness, lying in the gutter, where [illegible] water was dashing over me. An officer was called, who [illegible] ducted me hither. This is the whole of my story."

"Merciful heaven!" cried Walter. "And has it come [illegible]

this, that in our great country, the boasted land of freedom, the native citizen is thrust away from the portals of the public offices by the mere offscourings of all the monarchies of the earth! Shall the Irish and the Dutch hold the keys of our treasury, while we starve in the gutters?"

"Have you a clean shirt to loan me?" asked Pollen.

"Yes, you shall share my wardrobe, as you have partaken of my crust."

"I have eaten the half of a broiled chicken, and begin to feel comfortable!"

"A lady, sir!" said the keeper, peeping in.

"A lady!" said Parke. "Then we are *de trop*."

"And I am in a vile costume," said the poet. "But there is a closet. I'll retire——"

"No!" said Walter. "It may be the very thing for you to be seen thus. If it should be Virginia or Honoria——"

"Miss Wilsome Winkle!" said the keeper, admitting Walter's aunt.

"Oh, Walter! I forgive you for attending your uncle's wedding! Come to my arms, my poor, poor boy!"

She ran to him, and embraced him most affectionately. "And these are your fellow-prisoners—your vile companions—the low associates they have thrust you among."

"No—aunt! Do you not recognize my friends?"

"Where's my glass! Oh! Mr. Parke! I beg pardon, sir. And, mercy on me! Is it possible! What! Are you—you are! It is Mr. Pollen—and in this plight! It is a shame! Here, Walter, I've brought you a check. Send the keeper to a clothing store;—have every thing brought here, and furnish him with decent clothing. Lose no time."

Walter took the check. And while his aunt sat at the table, saturating her handkerchief with tears, he opened his trunk, and furnished the poet with a suit of his own clothing. Thus arrayed, Pollen was himself again, and made a very genteel appearance.

"What a shame!" repeated Wilsome, after she had made Pollen relate the manner of his being sent to prison. "And to be thrust away from the President's door by a nasty foreigner! It was worse than your case, Walter, which I read in the Ledger this morning."

A great deal worse!" said Walter. "Mine is a voluntary confinement."

"Now, pray, explain that to me. The letter in the paper intimated something of the sort which I couldn't comprehend. I could not see any reason or sense in remaining in such a place, where one had the option of going out of it."

Walter explained every thing; and his speech was succeeded by hearty bursts of laughter.

"You are an ingenious rogue, Walter; and I heartily forgive you. And you will be certain to succeed, since you see your offended aunt has been brought submissively to your rescue. Virginia will yield, I am quite sure; and the stratagem is so good a one, that I will do all in my power to assist you. But why not leave this place; she will not know it. You could date your notes from the prison in your comfortable room at the hotel. Let me go to the magistrate——"

"No—no—aunt. The magistrate won't know you——"

"If he won't take me as security, I'll give him a check for the whole amount!"

"No, no, no! I am comfortable here. If I was to return to my hotel, and still make Virginia believe I was in prison, she would never forgive me after finding it out. Wait till the colonel sees her, and describes my interview with——"

"Why do you pause? Interview with whom?"

After binding his auditors to secrecy, Walter related what had transpired with Honoria.

"Still it was a pity," said his aunt, "that you did not convert that poor creature from Jesuitism. You might have done it."

"But not without danger of losing Virginia," said Parke.

"I'm glad it is no worse," said Wilsome. Heighe! But this is a tiresome place! Walter, there are just four of us—clear away the things from the table, and let us have a sociable game of whist."

"We should be interrupted, aunt. And it might get into the papers."

"It might so! And I could not bear to have curious persons casting their vulgar looks at us. Suppose, then, I go to Virginia, and lament over your sad condition!"

"That will do!" cried Walter. "Don't ask any thing, aunt—no concession—or she will suspect us, and tear our scheme to tatters."

"I'll take your company along with me, we may want a game——"

"You may have the poet, but not George. I won't trust him!"

"And I won't trust myself! said Parke. But if the negotiation should finally fail, then there will be a clear field for me."

Miss Wilsome, taking Pollen with her, proceeded to the boarding house, where she found Virginia in tears. Her father was with her, having returned from the capitol, and had just completed the recital of the sufferings of our hero, and a description of his extraordinary interview with Honoria.

"Oh, dear, good Miss Wilsome," cried Virginia, throwing her arms around the old lady, "won't you go with my father and get him out of prison?"

"Why should we take all that trouble!" was the reply, "when he declares he has no desire to live any longer?"

"No desire to live any longer?"

"No, none at all. And he says it is a matter of perfect indifference whether he dies in a prison or a palace."

"It is cruel to talk thus! I have explained to papa why I was offended! Any one would have come to the same conclusion I did, upon the same information. Now if it be true, that my displeasure is the cause of his misery, you may assure him it exists no longer! Now do not delay in obtaining his release."

"There will be no delay!" said the poet. "I can assure you, Miss Oakdale, that Walter has acted with the strictest propriety and honor, as it regards this Mrs. Fimble."

"I am convinced of it. Do urge my father and Miss Wilsome to lose no time in taking him out of that vile prison! Go to him, Mr. Pollen, and say I shall be happy to see him at the earliest possible moment. And pardon my seeming boldness sir—but, you know when a fellow-creature is in distress——"

"Fellow-creature—Fudge!" exclaimed the colonel. "You must promise—you know my terms—or I won't budge a step."

"I do promise, father! You need not say what it is—but hasten!"

The colonel and Pollen then repaired to the magistrate and obtained Walter's release. The poet and George Parke

stopped at the hotel, and Walter hastened to appear before his appeased mistress.

Upon hearing the bell Virginia ran into the hall. Walter caught her in his arms and seized a kiss before she could utter an objection.

"Well, that business is settled," said the colonel— "it was done on the wing, and Walter is a good shot. Now I will return to the Senate chamber, and give Mr Ralph Roland his quietus."

"Ralph Roland!" said Walter, looking up from Virginia's blushing face, which had been nestling against his side.

"Yes. He has been appointed consul to London, and upon the recommendation of the ubiquitous Father Xavier but as one of the Senate, I do not consent to it. Take care of yourselves until I return."

The colonel hastened away to the capitol, and the lovers joined Miss Wilsome in the parlor.

"He does not look *very* pale," said Virginia.

"They fed him well, and——" Walter, by a look checked his aunt. "But you have triumphed over the most formidable rival," she continued, "if what I hear be true, that could have been pitted against you."

"She is beautiful," said Virginia; "I saw her at the party: and I never beheld a more perfect form, or more lovely features. I am sure I was not to blame," she continued archly, to Walter, "for giving you up as lost."

"But to think that when she was so lavish of her gracious smiles, she was plotting my defeat, and planning my confinement in prison! She is too dangerous an instrument ever to make an agreeable wife."

"And to pass for a married woman!" said his aunt, contemptously. "She must be an unprincipled creature!"

"Undoubtedly," said Walter. "And I have warned both Parke and Pollen to beware of her."

"I hope neither of them will seek her acquaintance," said Wilsome. "If they do, I shall banish them from my sight for ever."

"I am sorry you did not intimate your wishes sooner, aunt, but it is too late now. The poet is resolved to attend her this very night to the President's soiree——"

"I believe I shall go too, and strip his coat off——"

"In the presence of all the company, Miss Wilsome?" asked Virginia.

"Yes. It is not his own. If he dares to follow that papish heifer, he need never expect any indulgence from me! And I hope she'll land him where she placed Walter. There he may die!"

"Mercy on me!" said Virginia, aside to Walter, "I'm afraid she loves him!"

"By what symptom do you judge?" asked he, significantly.

"And that Southern goat!" continued Miss Wilsome—"no doubt he proposed it! I hope they may be punished to their heart's content! They are a couple of young, silly, headstrong fools."

A servant came in and announced that a gentleman, whose name was not given, desired to see Walter in the hall.

"I can't leave Virginia so soon," said Walter. "If he has the appearance of a gentleman conduct him hither."

He did have the appearance of a gentleman, and he came in. He said his friend Pollen had given him the number of the house where Walter could be found, and he was very happy to meet with him. After staring at him a few moments Walter sprung up and shook him heartily by the hand. It was Mr. Glass, the actor, whose acquaintance Walter had made at the the police station.

Mr. Glass informed his young friend that his daughter Delia had escaped the persecutions of Roland by drawing a dagger in her own defence. She had then, under an assumed name, acted in one of the Metropolitan theatres, and acquired some experience, but not much celebrity. But, acting upon the advice of Mr. Lowe, who subsequently became the Earl of Hilton, and bearing with them a letter from him, they had appeared upon the London boards, where they achieved decided success. And now his Delia, the actor continued with grateful tears in his eyes, was a star of the first magnitude, and overwhelmed with offers of advantageous engagements. Mr. Glass then said his daughter would soon appear in Washington, and he hoped Walter and his friends would honor her with their presence.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WALTER RETURNS WITH VIRGINIA AND HIS A DELPHIA.

Colonel Oakdale was in high spirits. His defeated Roland's nomination; and the prom opposition waited upon him at his boarding-h him upon his successful demonstration. Th wise to make the acquaintance of Walter a the colonel had, in a confidential way, mad friends that the secret of the young man's p maining in prison might find a solution in the tials of his daughter.

Hence there was a gay and brilliant con assembled in the parlors of the boarding-ho The colonel's quarrel with the President was t versation in all the political circles; and when tioned, it was likewise repeated that his dau espoused by Walter Winkle, the brave youn been imprisoned for an attempt to resent a among the initiated it was understood that moment of disaster, had the address to retrie an original conception of the mind, which w occurred to any one not gifted with some deg

Therefore the parlors where our party crowded with a constant succession of visitors notes of congratulation, written on scented pap by Walter, from unknown friends, that Virgin alarmed, and begged her father to permit he Miss Wilsome to Philadelphia the next day.

Walter sanctioned the proposition; and exhi from Sergeant Blore, declared his intention o home the next morning.

The next day there was rejoicing among c Washington when it was reported that young the city, and did not intend to make any pause The magistrate was greatly relieved by the int had received a message from the White Ho that the young lion was to be kept caged until feetly docile.

Arrived at Philadelphia, Walter conducted Virginia to her aunt Nitre's.

"I am so rejoiced!" exclaimed Mrs. N., when she came into the parlor, where our loving couple were laughing over the recent events at Washington, and particularly at the proposition of Miss Wilsome to have a game in prison. "Yes, I am happy to see you both safely back again. Washington is a terrible place. Never go there any more, Walter!"

"I must go when they elect me to Congress," said Walter.

"But you are not to be a candidate, unless you pledge yourself never to fight a duel," said Virginia. "Recollect your promise."

"I recollect it—and will observe it. I promised never to send another challenge."

"Nor must you accept one."

"Come in, doctor!" cried Mrs. N., hearing her husband descending the stairs. "Here are none but friends."

The doctor entered, and evinced the satisfaction he felt at seeing the young people reconciled to each other, and safely returned from Washington.

"I wanted the doctor to post off to Washington," said Mrs. N., "as soon as I saw the horrible paper; but he wouldn't! Men have no feeling. He said his business would suffer; I told him he had made money enough. He said his patients would die; I told him he might save Walter's life. All would not do. Men have no feeling, Walter."

"Excuse me, madam," said Walter, indignant at hearing Mrs. N. always abusing her husband, and one of the best husbands in the world—"but I think the doctor did perfectly right. He could have done me no service, I am sure. There were an abundance of friends who were willing to be my sureties and release me from confinement—but——"

"Upon my word," said Virginia, "it has never yet been satisfactorily explained to me why you remained in prison when you could have walked out."

"It is a long tale," said Walter. "But I was indifferent to my fate unless restored—you know. I will tell you every thing some day. I must bid you adieu, now, until I return from Babbleton——"

"No, no!" exclaimed Mrs. N. "You don't know what the

colonel says in his letter to me. *I* am to be the direc your actions——"

"Eh?" said Walter.

"I mean that Virginia is to be under my control suppose you will not be rebellious."

"After seeing my mother and my uncle, you ma mand me. Till then, adieu." After lingering a mos the hall with Virginia, Walter hastened away.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WALTER RETURNS HOME—MEETS WITH JOHN DOWLY—LU HER BROTHER HASTEN TO THEIR UNCLE—WHAT TRA THERE.

When Walter descended from the cars in front of t he espied Sergeant Blore peeping at him through the b window, and he beckoned him to come out. Blore, hasty reconnoissance from the door ventured forth, be many military salutations on our hero. Walter put an the company by taking the sergeant's hand between both and shaking it heartily.

"How is my uncle?" was Walter's first question.

"In great danger of being taken," said the sergeant.

"Danger of being taken?"

"Yes, he is surrounded and undermined, and wou have held out this long, if it hadn't been for Bawson, a spy in both camps, and serves the party best whic the most. It is fortunate that the enemy is miserly, chest would soon be exhausted."

"But how is my uncle's health?"

"Worse and worse. Every day the doctor comes a he's no better. Then what does he come for? Why, him! And the sheepskin-faced priest is there, too, course the patient will die! But you will revive him s He's always babbling about you, and Lucy, who arriv morning.—The enemy!"

When Blore made the last exclamation he sprang Walter, and endeavored to cover his body from the ol

tion of Mrs. Edwards, who was standing in the door of Lowe's cottage and gazing towards the inn.

"Don't be alarmed, sergeant; I did not think mortal woman could so terrify a brave soldier."

"Neither mortal man or woman can frighten me," said the sergeant. "But that is a she-devil! You should have heard her tongue in the camp. I've seen a whole mess put to flight by her, the next hour after they had gained a great victory over the enemy. If she sees us, Walter, you must protect me, won't you?"

"Certainly. But if you would carry with you a long hickory switch——"

"I tried it.—You might as well cut a shadow. The devil is in her, you may rely upon it. She's nothing but a shadow herself, a mere skeleton—a bundle of bones tied up in a bag of skin. But she has the voice of a volcano, and the strength of a roaring lion. I have her stripes on my body! She's gone in —— her! And now we are safe."

But Mrs. Edwards had caught a glimpse of the sergeant as she was closing the door, and immediately re-opened it. "The she-devil saw me through the door!" said the sergeant. "I'll run in here, and enter by the back way." He dodged into the yard through a small gate he found open, which he closed and bolted behind him.

Walter stumbled over the leaping and barking Dew at the door, and the next moment was embraced by his mother and sister.

"Lucy!" said he, after they were seated in the parlor, "you cannot know how much you have improved in appearance!"

"That is precisely what I have been saying," said Mrs. Winkle.

"She is the most lovely creature I ever saw!" continued Walter. "Lowe shall not have her, unless he stays——"

"Such language—even from us—" said Mrs. W. "makes the poor child blush, although she knows it is not flattery. What you say about Mr. Lowe, Walter——?"

"Is Walter's nonsense!" said Lucy. "He knows he is opposed to foreigners exercising any rights in this country."

"Rites, you mean, eh?"

"No matter—I don't belong to your party—you Know Nothing——"

"We'll see! But——"

"Who's there, Biddy?" asked Mrs. W. of the maid who appeared at the door.

"Dill Bizzle, mam."

"She will never learn his name," said Lucy, as often as he repeats it. Well, what does Bill want?"

"He's brung two ducks and a pike, which he begs with his comp'ments for you except."

"No," said Walter—"Bill must be paid. I'm rich. Give him that, Biddy. "He sent Bill a quarter-eagle."

"And pray how did you become rich?" asked Mrs. W.

Walter informed his mother and sister of his reconciliation with his Aunt Wilsome, who had given him a check for $500, and he had drawn the money that morning. He told them, moreover, that his aunt would be at *his* wedding.

"*Your* wedding!" said Lucy.

"Yes, and yours. She sanctions both matches, and says she knew Lowe was a gentleman. She shed tears when she saw me in prison."

"Wilsome never does any thing by halves," said Mrs. W. "her heart melted when your father died, and it was with difficulty I could prevent her from bestowing her fortune on me, although neither of us knew the embarrassed condition of her brother's estate."

"And she has forgiven Uncle Napoleon," added Walter. "She believes he will not survive long, and is ready to see him whenever he desires it. I must hasten to his side, and you must accompany me, Lucy, for if the sergeant's tale be true, he is in a dangerous condition."

"You must wait until John Dowly comes," said Mrs. Winkle. "He will be here soon, and then you can use his gig."

"I love him!" said both Walter and Lucy, for they had been informed of his acts of generosity.

"Now tell me about the Arums and Crudles," said Walter.

Lucy gave him all the information she could in relation to them, including the most recent conquest of Bell, which was a tufted cornet-a-piston player, belonging to the orchestra of the circus. He had passed himself as a French count, and so adroitly did he play his part, that he absolutely led Miss Arum to the altar——

"To the altar!" exclaimed Walter.

"To the altar!" repeated Lucy. "But when the priest—a Jesuit, for the count of course was a foreigner——"

"Of course!" said Walter.

"When he called upon the witnesses, if any of them knew any impediment, to come forward, one *did* step forward——"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, indeed. It was the noble old Col. Ball, and with a blow of his cane, he felled the impostor!"

"Capital!"

"He then whispered in Bell's ear that the fellow was a circus cornet-a-piston player, on a salary of four dollars a week!"

"What did poor Bell say?"

"Nothing. She grasped the colonel's proffered arm and hastened out of the church!"

"But what did the priest say?"

"Oh, he was furious. The colonel gave him his card, and said he should be happy to have the pleasure of shooting him through the body the next morning at Hoboken. And if he could not conveniently or consistently meet him himself, he might send a substitute, or a dozen of them, and he would fight them all. And I learned afterwards that the colonel did promenade the bank for an hour the next day, but no antagonist sought him."

"After that, I suppose the girls beat a retreat from the city?"

"Oh, yes. They are here, now. And Susan is in love with your friend George Parke. She believes he will come for her some day, and she is determined to wait for him. Yonder is the old gig!"

They ran to the window and saw old John Dowly descend from his vehicle. He left his gentle horse unfastened, knowing he could not be made to run away, and then knocked very gravely at the door, as he used to do before bells were in general use.

Lucy was the first to meet the old gentleman, and she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him!

"My beautiful, lovely child!" said the old man, manifesting his delight through his tears. "This is the happiest moment of my life!"

"You have been our benefactor—our protector—the friend of the widow and her orphans!" said Walter.

"I had none of my own—I had none of my own!"

"No widow of his own!" said the widow, smiling.

"I am so happy I don't know what I say!" replied the old bachelor. "But I have endeavored to do what I felt to be right, and I shall never regret it."

"No, Mr. Dowly!" said Walter. "You will never regret it. Your Maker will reward you, if we should never be able to do so."

"Don't say a word about reward! If you knew what dreams I have every night, you would say I have been already repaid a thousand fold. I am rich. I have quietly been accumulating wealth for many years—not as a selfish and miserable miser, as some in the city suspected—but for a *good* purpose. And now my object is accomplished. Lucy shall have a dowry worthy a countess!"

"Mr. Dowly!" cried Mrs. Winkle.

"She shall! I say she shall! On the day of her marriage she shall place in her noble husband's hand—I mean noble in heart, for I know him well, and have known him long—sterling bills for £50,000!"

"Are you not raving, Mr. Dowly?" asked Walter.

"You'll see! and the remainder of my fortune——"

"What? will there be any left?" asked Mrs. Winkle.

"Shall go to—no matter. But this, I may say, a certain mortgage for $10,000 has been conveyed to a certain young lady, loved by a certain young gentleman, of my acquaintance. It is recorded in the clerk's office."

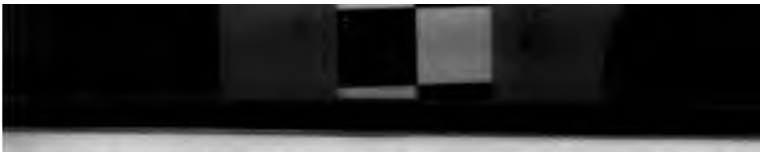
"And will you not be a beggar yourself?" asked Lucy, while she pressed the old gentleman's hand to her lips.

"So far from it, I intend to build a new house, and live more elegantly than I have done hitherto. And I shall begin anew this very day, to enjoy the bounties which my Maker has bestowed upon us for our comfort and happiness. I will stay here, and drink a cheerful glass of wine, and talk over these matters with your mother, if she will permit me."

"Permit you!" said Lucy—and the tears gushed from her eyes.

"God bless you, John Dowly!" said the widow—"and may he forgive me, if I did wrong in rejecting so generous a heart——"

"Tut—tut! Not a word about that! Better as it is! I



never could have been so happy. I am now brother, uncle, father—Bless my life! What a scene!"

He had turned his face towards the window, where he beheld Mrs. Edwards leading Sergeant Blore by the ear, an unresisting captive.

"I'll rescue Blore, or die in the attempt!" said Walter. And he rushed into the street and reprimanded the woman in terms of indignation.

"He is my usband, please sir," said Mrs. E., relinquishing Blore's ear, "hand hit his a most hextrahordinary thing hif I can't harrest my hown desarter!"

"Go in, Mrs. Edwards," said Walter. "Hide your head in shame, for you were the first to abandon your conjugal partner. You married again while he remained true. You have no just claim upon him now. If you create any disturbance in the street, I shall have you arrested."

"Thank you, Walter!" said Blore, when Mrs. Edwards had vanished. "She wants my money—but you shall have it——"

"Not I. Keep it for your declining years. But do not let this woman distress you any more. If she again assaults you, let me know it."

"I will. If she was only a man, I would call her out and settle with pistols. I don't know what would have happened if she had got me in the house! Such creatures are made to punish us for our sins! Sometimes I think I will blow out my brains, and give her the slip that way. But after that, who knows if I wouldn't some day meet her again?"

"You must not have any such thoughts, sergeant. I will ask her master to send her home to England."

"If he does that, I shall be a happy man. Now I must go to your uncle. I would have been half way there now if she hadn't waylaid me."

"I shall follow you soon. Tell him so. And Lucy will accompany me."

Blore hurried away under cover of Walter's protection, though casting an occasional glance behind until he was out of sight.

Shortly afterwards, Walter and Lucy drove out towards Mr. Napoleon Winkle's country mansion in Mr. Dowly's old gig. As the gentle horse moved along at his accustomed easy pace, Lucy, after exacting a promise from her brother not to

use any violence, related the manner of Roland's [illegible] to inveigle her into a clandestine marriage, and [illegible] quent annoyances. Walter, with quivering [illegible] brow, said he would not violate his pledge, [illegible] were not so restrained, he should certainly [illegible] with the utmost severity.

When they arrived in front of the stately [illegible] industrious Bill Dizzle was already there in [illegible] the gate. Walter thanked him for his attention [illegible] that he could bestow no greater pleasure on the [illegible] than to employ his services, threw him the [illegible] descended, and requested him to drive back [illegible] and leave the vehicle at his mother's door, and [illegible] Dowly in his name for the use of it. Bill [illegible] horse strike into a brisker gait than the one he [illegible] customed to.

Walter and Lucy passed through a file of Gris[illegible] ing servants, and mounted the great stairway [illegible] their uncle's chamber. They entered, and [illegible] Xavier and Griselda standing at the fire [illegible] corner of the mantelpiece, with their eyes [illegible] the bed, where the patient was lying. Sergeant [illegible] seated near his friend, holding one of his hands. Mr. W[illegible] lay on his back with his eyes closed.

"Is he asleep?" asked Walter, in a whisper.

"Oh, my dear uncle!" said Lucy, in a voice of [illegible]

"Hush! Make no noise!" said Griselda [illegible] ward, and nodding gravely to the visitors. Father X[illegible] muttered a benediction in Latin.

"How do you feel, uncle?" asked Walter, [illegible] tient remove his hand, which Blore had been [illegible] silently grasp his own. Walter, in obedience to the [illegible] wish as indicated by his motion, bent down his ear.

"I am better," whispered he. Walter [illegible] smile which Lucy's quick eyes detected and her [illegible]

"My [illegible] desires every one to leave the [illegible] Walter, in a voice of command, "but my sister and [illegible]

After lingering a moment, Griselda followed [illegible] of the room, and Blore, comprehending Walter's sign [illegible] had joined the retiring party, and prevented them from [illegible] tening at the key hole.

The old gentleman, with eyes wide open, rose up on his elbow, and listened to the departing footsteps; and when Walter turned the key, he sat upright in bed, with a broad smile on his face.

"I am glad, uncle—" began Lucy.

"Hush!" said he. "Wait a moment!"

"I do not see why you should be in such dread of them," said Walter.

"Wait till you are married!" said his uncle.

"But are you not ill?" asked Lucy.

"No! My health is perfect. It is a mere stratagem. You shall know all. Even Bloro is ignorant of my condition and purpose. He might hold his tongue, but his face speaks his feelings, and would betray the secret. Dr. Prangle has been my only confederate."

"But why should you be reduced to the necessity of resorting to such expedients?" asked Lucy.

"Because I have a Tartar for my wife; an instrument of the Jesuits, with the whole inquisition at her back. I was a prisoner in effect. I could not live with a sour, dissatisfied, scolding woman. Well, when I complied with all her caprices, she was a sugar-plum, or seemed so; but when I opposed her slightest whim, she was a green persimmon. By this system she obtained by imperceptible degrees the complete mastery. Every one yielded to her, and I among the rest. I could not mount my horse, nor even walk in the orchard or garden, without incurring her acid looks, and often a storm of bitter invectives. For the sake of peace, I confined myself to my library, and read once more the campaigns of the great genius; when, suddenly, my peace was interrupted by a discovery that my real estate could not be alienated from the family by my will. Then I perceived very plainly the game my spouse had been playing, and comprehended the motive of the Jesuit's frequent visits. I happened to be reading, just then, the account of the emperor's attempt to commit suicide, after his first abdication; and the suggestion of some one that it was not a serious attempt to take his own life, but done for some other purpose, caused me to conceive the idea of pretending to be dangerously ill. After some little persuasion, the doctor became my confederate. I hear him coming, now!" He resumed his former attitude, lying on his back with his eyes nearly closed.

"How do you do? How do you do?" said [illegible] upon entering the room, and shaking hands with W[illegible] Lucy. "I am glad to find you with your [illegible] ness is a most distressing affliction, when [illegible] not near to nurse him. How do you find [illegible] morning," continued the doctor, taking the pat[illegible]

"They know all, doctor. No more [illegible] old gentleman, resuming his upright position [illegible] W[illegible] now begin to look for results, for the critical [illegible] hand. I await only the arrival of my sister W[illegible] strike the decisive blow. Walter is now writing [illegible] to-morrow. Go to the enemy, doctor, and tell them [illegible] possibly survive more than another day. You [illegible] them of my danger, and leave your prescription [illegible] which they will throw in the fire, or if the [illegible] cured, I will throw it out of the window. But you [illegible] paid, doctor."

The doctor smiled, and then adjusting his [illegible] their accustomed grave expression, sought Gris[illegible] Jesuit priest.

"Uncle!" said Walter, "it seems to me you [illegible] accomplished your object by a more direct means——

"You know nothing——"

"He is a Know Nothing, uncle," said Lucy.

"What's that? I never heard of them before [illegible] came here. They seem to frighten him very much."

"Two thirds of the voters in the county [illegible] der," said Walter.

"No matter. What I meant to say was that [illegible] never know the influence of a wife until you have [illegible] mine, I now perceive, is altogether unworthy of me [illegible] [illegible] and her Jesuit [illegible] You will [illegible] the sport Walter [illegible] [illegible] Send it by Dizzie. Now I must [illegible] close my eyes, and pick the bed clothes. I hear them coming

exception of a few trifling legacies, was bequeathed to his dearly beloved wife!

"Gusset, this thing is a contrivance of yours!" said Wilsome, taking the instrument out of her brother's hand.

"I won't be insulted in my own house!" said Griselda, snatching the will away from Wilsome.

"Let me have the custody of it," said the priest, putting it in his bosom.

"You impudent bonnet-maker!" said Wilsome. "*Your* house! The little white two-story frame shop, where there used to be a wooden head—yes, a blockhead—is yours!"

"Be peaceable in the chamber of the dying!" said the priest.

"He shan't make such a will!" continued Wilsome. "It is unjust, and he could not have been in his right mind! He shall make another, and I will be a witness to it. Where's the lawyer?"

"Here, madam!" said Bawson, sliding into the room, having been listening outside of the door.

"If you advise it, I will do so, sister," said the patient.

"You see that the poor man has no mind of his own," said the priest; "and any will he may now sign, can be of no virtue."

"That is true, father Xavier," said Griselda, "and your words will be repeated in court!"

"I will sign this will," said Napoleon, drawing forth the one he had kept concealed about his person. "Give me pen and ink, Bawson."

"He is *non compos mentis*," said the priest. "Daughter, let us not be witnesses of such iniquity! Come with me."

"Yes, go," said Napoleon, "and remain in the cabinet till I send for you. If the doctor comes, despatch him to me," he added, as the priest and Griselda closed the door behind them.

"You have made a good beginning, uncle," said Walter.

"Oh, if sister Wilsome will support me, the enemy shall be utterly routed, and I will recover my happiness. But before we proceed any farther, let me vindicate myself. Some men of military passions delight in slaughter, and they are applauded by the world. Some paint battle scenes with the brush, which are admired by millions. Poets describe the sanguinary conflict, and mock heroes enact feats of arms on

the stage. None of these are ridiculed as madmen. Then why should I be censured or laughed at for enjoying the sport in my own inoffensive way? I read of the achievements of that extraordinary man who conquered Europe, and I amuse myself by re-enacting his exploits in imagination, on my own fields. Why am I termed a monomaniac? All men and women are monomaniacs, as I can prove by a book in my library. You, my sister, are crazy on the subject of cards——"

"Cards! The most rational amusement in the world!"

"Miss Flora Blount," continued Napoleon, "has a monomaniacal passion for novels. Griselda must be an imperious mistress. Xavier must be canonized, like Loyola. Pollux, the poet, must be an erratic genius, like Coleridge. And so with thousands, whose views differ from the mass. But the mass—the millions themselves—who struggle desperately for the superfluous heaps of gold that glitter in their waking dreams are the most absurd maniacs of all! They could not enjoy more than an insignificant portion of the huge fortunes they strive to obtain, nor can they take them hence! Then who can be a more ridiculous and raving monomaniac than the man who perils health, life, happiness, here and hereafter, for the acquisition of wealth which he cannot enjoy! I shall resume my amusements. You have my reasons, which you may, if you see proper, repeat to others. Why do you stare so, Samson? I have not been ill at all. Lucy, bring me the fried oysters from the closet. But I will rise and dress before I eat them. Walter, give me my breeches——"

"Brother!" said Wilsome, springing up, "I hope you would not be so indelicate as to rise and dress in my presence."

"Go, then, with Lucy into the next room. I shall certainly rise and dress."

As the ladies went out the doctor came in.

"Ah! Winkle!" said he, "I am a true prophet. The change has occurred just as I predicted. But not as the couple I met in the library would wish. They hurried me away, and I must immediately report to them. What shall I say?"

"Wait till I fasten this button. You must say it is all over with me. Stop! Stay a few minutes. Set out the table, Walter. Place chairs around it. So! Come in, sister!"

"That looks like preparing for a game," said Wilsome, glancing at the table and chairs."

"Exactly! Choose your partner, Wilsome—Lucy or Walter. I'll take the other, and beat you for a bottle. Have you any cards?"

"Yes—here in my pocket. I'll take Walter."

"Very good. All sit down. Now, Bawson, go with the doctor to the library. Tell them they may come in and see the end. Say, doctor, that your duties are ended—and you may send in your bill to-morrow. And tell them I signed the other will before I departed."

It was not long before the voices of Griselda and Xavier could be heard, but not in lamentation.

"We can establish the fact," said the priest, "that he was not of sane mind when they caused him to sign the last will."

"If they will take my testimony," said Griselda, "I can prove he had no mind of his own."

"But he has recovered his senses," said Napoleon, playing the last card in his hand, and lifting his large eyes just as Griselda and the priest came into the room.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Griselda.

"There has been a gross deception practised on us," said the priest.

"No. You have deceived yourselves," said Napoleon, sternly. "Why do you stare so? We are merely a party of Winkles, all in perfect health, and amusing ourselves, as we have a perfect right to do. We are not interlopers here. We are on our own premises. But who are you? I will tell you. That woman, by her false pretences, induced me to believe she honestly sympathized in the pursuit of my innocent pleasures, when others either ridiculed or condemned my idiosyncrasy. I married her, as a reward for what I supposed to be her generous defence of me; and bestowed upon her both my name and a comfortable home. But she had not been the mistress of my household twenty-four hours, before she exhibited her true colors. Without being restrained by any considerations of modesty or propriety, and forgetting her former humble condition, she seized the reins as one having the right to rule despotically. This I endured, until I became convinced she had neither affection nor respect for me, her benefactor; and that she had been made the instrument of an equivocal order of religionists, whose interference in the domestic affairs of

unsuspecting families has become a proverb and an opprobrium in all Christian lands. It was then that I resolved to disenthrall myself, and to banish from my hearth such an impudent and mischievous intruder. Such, madam, is the sentence I pronounced, and which will be immediately put in execution.

"Now, sir," he continued, turning to the priest, "when you crossed my threshold, you were well aware that I had relations to inherit my fortune. I need not ask you if it can be truly serving your Maker, to snatch the bread from the widow and the orphan. These young relations of mine, as you well know, and knew at the time, are orphans, and destitute of fortune——"

"Pooh! Brother!" said Wilsome, "don't expose the family. I intend to leave them my fortune. Pitch the priest out of the window, and be done with it."

"You say well, sister; but still I desire to utter my emphatic condemnation of the practice of having sinners encouraged by the fallacious promises of gowned hypocrites, who bestow their fortunes as an equivalent for repentance, or as the purchase-money of redemption, while their families are left to starve, and subjected to all the temptations to crime which poverty entails! I thank my Maker that I have risen superior to such delusions.

"Now, madam," he continued, turning again to Grizzle, "I do not intend to sue for a divorce; but we shall never meet again. If you claim it, and the law allows it, I will provide for your maintenance; but you shall dwell no more under my roof. Pack up your clothes. I will send your trunk after you. You have the option to go on foot to your ship in the village, or to ride in a cart. My coach you shall never enter again."

"As for you, insidious and sinful priest, I turn you over to the tender mercies of the one you sought to despoil of his natural inheritance. Take charge of him, Walter."

Walter rose up quickly, and passing between the astonished couple, approached the window.

"Now! Close your ears, aunt!" cried he, pulling a cord that came in at the window.

The next moment the company were startled by a volley of musketry. This was succeeded by the rub-a-dub-dub of a

drum, and soon after the measured tramp of a file of Blore's men were heard descending the stairway.

The sergeant himself came in, and going up to the priest, slapped him smartly on the shoulder, and ordered him to face about and march. Walter followed them out of the room.

"Why don't you pack up your things, Gusset?" demanded Wilsome. "Don't speak, but go about it instantly. I will not lose sight of you until you leave my brother's premises, for fear you might set fire to the house. Go—or I will lead you by the ear, you impudent strumpet!"

Griselda obeyed, livid with rage, and speechless with astonishment. And a few minutes afterwards she might have been seen alone and on foot hurrying along the road towards Babbleton.

Lucy sought the cook, to order dinner for her uncle; while the liberated commander promenaded his hall with the lofty bearing of a monarch.

Walter and the sergeant conducted their prisoner through the orchard towards the barracks, while the drum played the rogue's march.

Arrived at the quarters of the men, a cord and a staff were produced, and the prisoner was made to sit down on a blanket. His hands were tied before him, his knees were pulled up between his arms, and the staff thrust through in such a manner as to prevent him from rising.

"*Frangas non flectes!*"* said the prisoner, with a smile.

"What's that he says?" asked Blore.

"It's the devil's lingo," said one of the men, who professed to have a smattering of all languages.

"*Extremis malis, extrema remedia*,"† said Walter.

"There! that's good Dutch," said the wise linguist; "and it's the language the devil speaks most fluentially, and understands the perfectest."

"But what does it mean?" asked Blore.

"Am I the devil that I should understand it? Let him use the Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, French, Irish or Scotch, and you'll see how quick I'll turn it into English for you!"

"It was by such suffering," said the priest, "that Francis Xavier became a saint!"

* You may bend, but cannot break me.
† To extreme evils we must apply desperate remedies.

"Your prototype and namesake," said Walter, "was a good man. The founders of your order were pure and holy. They made voluntary sacrifices *themselves*, for the benefit of the cause in which they were embarked; and were never known to use fraud in coercing others to contribute to their coffers. They were honest men, and went about the world healing the wounds of miserable humanity; but their degenerate successors have reversed their principle of action. They care not for the desolation and ruin left behind them, in their ambitious endeavors to obtain *earthly* wealth and human power."

"That is merely the vulgar opinion—the slander of the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc."

"No, sir. It is true. You have commanded your agents and spies, absolving them from the guilt of perjury, to become members of our order of Americans, for the purpose of sowing discord amongst us. But you have failed. On the contrary, without incurring the same guilt, we have obtained a knowledge of your designs. We have availed ourselves of your example, so far as secrecy was concerned, to counteract your iniquitous operations. We shall confront you at every turn. Throughout this broad land, wherever there may be a sneaking political Jesuit, there will be found a score of patriotic Americans to oppose him. Perform your duty, men!"

As Walter said this, four of the strongest men seized the blanket at its corners, and commenced tossing up the prisoner. Sometimes he fell on his back, sometimes on his face; on his feet, and on his head, alternately; but he received no bodily injury. When he had been exercised thus for some minutes to the infinite diversion of the company, he was put down and unbound. But during this operation, a number of printed bonds, Philadelphia 6's, fell from his bosom.

"Why, you impudent thief!" said Walter, looking at the papers, "these bonds belong to my uncle. They are payable to him, and he has not indorsed them. You must have stolen them."

"No, my son. They were given me by your pious Aunt Griselda, in accordance with the provision of the will."

"I will take the liberty of returning them to my uncle. Now, sir, you shall be released. I will not require any promises or oaths from you, since it would appear that your religion has run into such excesses as to tolerate and justify every

thing which the Bible teaches is dishonorable and sinful. But you may rely upon this: that in every council of the Know Nothings your iniquity shall be made known; and that whenever you attempt to execute any of your impious designs, you will be again tossed in a blanket. In our order you have at last found a match for your own execrable machinery. You will not alone henceforth wield the terrors of an awful mystery. Beware, in time! Do not exasperate the millions in this land of liberty, or you will be annihilated at one blow. You never can be sufficiently numerous and powerful to prevail against us."

"*Fide et fortitudine*,"* said the priest.

"*Fide, non armis*,"† replied Walter.

"What's that?" asked Blore.

"It's all as plain as the face of the bull yonder, staring at us across the water," said the learned soldier. "The priest says *fight with fortitude*—and Walter says *fight not our armies*, and he gives him good advice. It is the language of the great Florentine."

Both the priest and Walter smiled at the erudition of the man, whose interpretation was not without signification.

Father Xavier did not tarry when permitted to depart, and as he strode towards the high road leading to the village, the drummer again played the rogue's march.

When it was ascertained that the last of the invaders had retired from the premises, all the forces of the garrison were assembled by Blore in front of the mansion, where they uttered cheer after cheer most vociferously. Napoleon appeared on the balcony, and manifested by his looks of pleasure the happiness he felt. And he gave an order for the event of his enfranchisement to be celebrated in an appropriate manner. In effect, soon afterward, the whole country, for miles round, was startled by the repeated discharges of artillery. At first it was supposed an heir had been born; but when it was understood that the doctor's visits had been made to the commander himself, it was taken for granted that the patient was gone. Blore, however, did not permit the inhabitants of Babbleton to remain long in ignorance. He dispatched a courier to the village with the news of the expulsion of the "Tartarian," as he called her; and long before Gusset reached her shop, for her walking was impeded by several monstrous corns on her

* By faith and fortitude. † By faith, not arms.

feet, the urchins of the village were collected in full force in the middle of the street in readiness to hoot at her. Pale, and completely subdued, the disgraced wife rushed into her own humble domicil. Her tenant, and successor in business, gazed in astonishment. But the tale was soon told. It was quickly babbled throughout the village. And, singular as it may appear, Gusset had not one to sympathize with her. The poor, of her own condition, had been abandoned and frowned upon by her; and the rich, such as the Arums and the Cradles, could have no respect for any but the rich, or those in more elevated positions than themselves. They sought to level upwards, not downwards. And hence poor Gusset could look for nothing but jeers and contumely from her own sex.

Miss Wilsome having imparted to her brother the information that both Lucy and Walter were to be married in the spring, and that the countess and the earl would not sail for England before midsummer, he immediately proposed that his niece, and Lowe, and the countess, should occupy his spacious mansion, as the guests of Walter, which was agreed to—Lucy remaining silent, but looking very grateful.

In the afternoon the splendid coach was ordered out, and Walter and Wilsome were driven in great state through the streets of Babbleton to Mrs. Winkle's mansion. Lucy remained with her uncle, as his housekeeper. But Walter rejoined her in the evening, and superintended a grand illumination of the mansion, which was admired by thousands.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SNOBSON'S MARRIAGE—BOLAND'S FAILURE.

What a buzz there was in Babbleton! The sudden discharges of cannon at the garrison after so long a silence, had at first put the country on the *qui vive*; and afterwards when it was known that the beldame parvenu had fallen from her high estate—she who had once submitted to the humiliation of repairing old bonnets for housemaids and cooks to wear o' Sundays, and had afterwards been made the mistress of one of the finest establishments in the country—there could be no

further restraint imposed upon the gossiping inclinations of the inhabitants. Woe to the wife who is put away by her husband! she falls like Lucifer, never to rise again!

The Winkles were once more in the ascendant. They were again a united family, rich and powerful. The papers had announced the approaching nuptials of Lucy with the Earl of Hilton, and now a paragraph was going the rounds to the effect that Walter had been released from jail by the fair daughter of a distinguished senator, who was soon to become his wife, and bind him for ever with hymenial fetters.

During the few months immediately succeeding the recovery of Mr. Napoleon Winkle, Miss Wilsome, Lucy, and Virginia, spent the greater portion of their time at his stately old mansion, which they had renovated and adorned in the most approved style preparatory for the festivities of which it was soon to be the scene. It is not to be supposed that Lowe and Walter did not sometimes mingle in their consultations. Even the widow Winkle herself, who had not been farther from home than the church for many years, might have been seen occasionally occupying a seat in the old family coach, as it daily rolled backwards and forwards between the chateau and the village. The countess too, accompanied by Mrs. Laurel, made several incognito visits to the village and the palace without being detected by the reporters.

Mr. Napoleon Winkle, in consideration of the fact that the countess still lamented the loss of her lord on the field of Waterloo, suspended his operations in the field, and contented himself with the game of chess. In this manner, knights were overthrown, castles taken, and kings check-mated, — the countess herself being a match for him, and fond of the game.

The time fixed upon for the celebration of the double nuptials was the week succeeding the adjournment of Congress. That was the period dictated by Colonel Oakland for the exchange of ratifications.

But the Winkles were not to be permitted to monopolize the hymenial altar in Babbleton. Negotiations were reopened by Blanche Arum with Mr. Thomas Snobson, and a treaty of alliance unconditionally aggreed upon, and sanctioned by their parents. The young ones being resolved to marry, their parents, under the supposition that their maintenance would cost them but little if any more united, than when separated, yielded to their determination.

When it was understood there was certainly to be a wedding in the Arum family,—and such things are not easily concealed,—the Cradles were immediately roused to action. Mrs. Cradle undertook to dispose of her eldest daughter to Mr. Roland; and within forty-eight hours of the conception of the resolution, she had so far succeeded, that it only remained for Susan to name the day. She consulted Blanche Arum, and it was agreed that their nuptials should precede those of the Winkles, and be celebrated the week before the adjournment of Congress.

When the day arrived, as every appointed day must arrive, however distant, Roland and Snobson led their elected brides to the altar in full church. Lowe and Lucy, Walter and Virginia, and Parke—who still lingered in the north, while his mother was looking for him in the south—and Julia Nitre were among the congregation of witnesses. It has never been asserted in general conversation that Walter was more than a mere spectator: but we suppose it to be quite probable he was an instigator, if not an actor, of one of the most unexpected and novel scenes that ever occurred in the church at Babbleton. Even Lowe and Parke were, very probably, privy to the plot. The young ladies, however—Lucy, Virginia, Julia—must be acquitted of any complicity. They were merely innocent spectators of the ceremony—innocent and interested—for each and all of them thought of the approaching day, then near at hand, when they too would be called upon to stand at the same altar and make the same responses.

But why had Bawson been so often in consultation with Walter? It was natural to suppose their business had reference to a marriage settlement, and no one thought it at all remarkable. And it was to settle a marriage with a vengeance!

The ceremony proceeded, Mr. Amble officiating, with long candles burning behind the altar, although there was an abundance of glorious sunshine pouring in at the doors and windows. The question of precedence, after a protracted discussion of three days, had been settled, and Blanche was to be wedded first.

At the appointed signal from the priest, Snobson and his elect approached the chancel with quivering lips and trembling knees. But, as Mr. Napoleon Winkle remarked, they faced the fire very well, considering the desperate affair they were engaged in. They were united "for better, for worse, for

richer, for poorer," and then drew back and yielded the place of execution, as Napoleon called it, to the other victims.

Roland led Susuan forward with consummate impudence. Napoleon said he was fool-hardy. The minister proceeded. A stillness prevailed when he came to the words—"If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter hold his peace."

"If it please your honor," said Bawson, rising in his pew, and addressing the minister as he would a judge, "I have something to say why they may not lawfully be joined together."

A thrill of horror shot through nearly every breast. For many moments all eyes were fixed upon the lawyer, and a profound silence ensued, which intimidated Bawson himself.

"What have you to say, sir?" at last demanded Roland, the minister seeming to be incapable of uttering any thing further.

"That I am prepared to show just cause why you may not be lawfully joined together," said Bawson, still standing.

"What can you show?" demanded Roland.

"That you are already married to Elizabeth Dizzle."

"Bets Dizzle!" repeated many voices.

"How can you show that?"

"By this deposition," said Bawson, drawing forth the document, which he was about to commence reading, when Mr. Crudle rushed forward and caught his fainting daughter in his arms, and bore her away from the church.

Roland mounted his horse and galloped off towards the hut occupied by the Dizzles, but it had been abandoned, and Elizabeth was then in the village, sojourning with the lawyer's family.

From tongue to tongue the exciting news expanded over the village with surprising rapidity. Nor was the astonishing announcement of Roland's marriage with Betsy Dizzle, the only incident which elated the good citizens of Babbleton that day. For the father of Tom Snobson, when waiting at the depot for the train which was to convey him back to the city, received a telegraphic dispatch which caused him to fall down in a fit. His son's father-in-law read the communication, while the rest were sprinkling the broker's face with ice water. It was the announcement of the failure of one of the largest private banking houses in the country, with which Snobson was intimately connected and deeply involved. Nor was that all.

Crudle himself had been induced to join them in the gigantic railroad speculation which caused the disaster. And now, upon the wedding day, they were both ruined!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

END OF THE HISTORY.

The bishop came from Summerton to perform the ceremony. Three weddings at a time! For after Edmund and Lucy, and Walter and Virginia were irrevocably linked together, Mr. William Dizzle and Miss Patty O'Pan were also joined in wedlock.

It would be impossible to describe with the pen the felicities of that day. The company present came from as many as three cities; and satins and jewels, and happy faces surrounded the altar. Even Mrs. Edwards was there, in the gallery, while Sergeant Blore looked in from an open window, having had a platform erected for the purpose on the outside. And while his single eye beame like a star on the faces of Walter and Lucy, Mrs. Edwards' optics were fixed upon him. When the ceremony was over, and the party were partaking of the refreshments prepared at the Widow Winkle's mansion, the sergeant emerged from behind the church in fancied security. But he was confronted at the gate by a man over six feet in height.

"My mother wishes to see you, sir," said the stranger. "She says she has something to say which you will be delighted to hear."

"Who are you?—and who is your mother?" demanded the old warrior.

"Mrs. Edwards is my mother, sir; and I am in the service of the Countess of Hilton."

"Mrs. Edwards! And she was my wife! Sir—who was your father? What is your name?"

"Dick Edwards, sir."

"Dick Edwards! Well, Mr. Edwards, what do you want with me? My name is Thomas Blore—and I hope you have not come to claim me as your father! I won't acknowledge you.

sir! I deny it, sir! I'll——knock you down, sir!" continued the sergeant, lifting his stick.

But Dick being called away, to attend his mistress, the furious sergeant was left alone in his fury.

The merry cavalcade following the coaches, proceeded out on the road leading to Mr. Napoleon Winkle's mansion, where preparations had been made for a grand festival.

Blore followed on foot, growling and gesticulating angrily, for the appearance of Mr. Dick Edwards had thrown him into a most violent passion, at the moment when he supposed he was about to have a day of perfect happiness. When he arrived at the garrison, however, he was met by Walter, who appeased him by the comfortable assurance that Mrs. Edwards was to sail for England the next week. At the mansion, Mrs. Laurel, Mrs. Winkle, Miss Wilsome and Miss Flora surveyed with pleasure the vast arrangements consummated by Napoleon for the entertainment of the guests.

The sumptuous feast and the merry dance filled the first day; and the next morning the brides crowned the good old John Dowly with wreaths of flowers. And after that ceremony was over, Miss Wilsome proposed that a row of tables should be placed in the long saloon, and that the company be divided into whist parties! Her brother Napoleon offered an entertainment on the lawn, where the whole park of artillery had been drawn up and charged to the muzzles. But Colonel Oakdale objected. He said the stunning noise would be too shocking for the ladies, and that the smoke would spoil their dresses. But he suggested that Edmund and Walter should accompany him into the meadows with their guns, where there would be excellent sport among the woodcock. Miss Flora Blount said such a selfish proposition was most abominable, and that the brides would never consent to it. Lucy and Virginia confirmed her opinion; but neither could they sanction the scheme she proposed, which was merely a recapitulation of all the romantic incidents connected with their several courtships.

While they were discussing the means of adding to their bliss, which would have been a vain endeavor, a carriage drove up to the portico, from which descended Mr. and Mrs. Parks. Then it was understood why Julia Nitre had disappointed her cousin Virginia.

"I promised to be present at the wedding," said Julia.

"And you meant your own," said Virginia.

It was confessed that they had been "engaged" for several months, and had deliberately planned the surprise.

Several months after these happy events, our principal characters, as well as thousands besides, were shocked [illegible] the announcement of the death of the poet, Harold P[illegible]. Of all the vicissitudes which had attended his erratic [illegible] the final one was the most deplorable. He died after a brief illness, and before his friends could learn the particulars of his condition, in the Almshouse!

Gusset never sought to annoy her husband again, but lived in humble obscurity under the advice of Father X[illegible], who did not desire a renewal of hostilities with the Winkles.

Blore fought his battles over again for many a day [illegible] the direction of his old commander, and without [illegible] from the young mistress of the mansion, the lovely Virginia.

The widow Winkle could not be induced to abandon her abode in the village; but every year she spent a portion of her time with Walter at the chateau, in company with Wilson and Flora, and where John Dowly was ever an honored guest.

Lucy, the new countess, and her sensible lord, came over regularly once a year in an American steamer. And L[illegible] never ceased to enjoy the angling and shooting in his old haunts.

Walter had the triumph of defeating Plastic in an exciting political campaign; while the colonel retained his place in the Senate.

Roland was cast in a suit prosecuted by Bawson, and adjudged to pay Elizabeth, his wife, two thousand dollars per annum for her maintenance.

Bill Dizzle and Patty occupied a comfortable farm house on Walter's estate—the one catching, the other cooking the frogs and "turtles."

Honoria disappeared after the publication of Walter's [illegible]. It was surmised that she had entered a convent. But Mr. [illegible] continued to obtain lucrative contracts from the government, and the inauguration of the next President, who was an [illegible].

[illegible]

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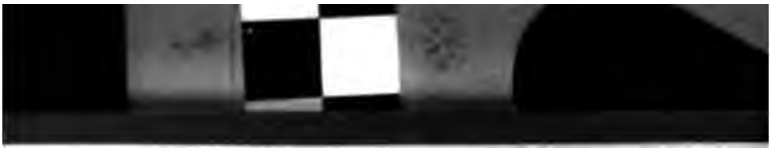

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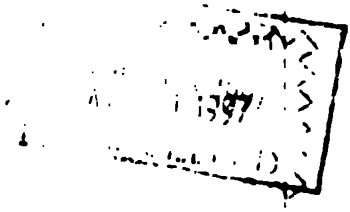

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Gusset never sought to annoy her husband again, but lived in humble obscurity under the advice of Father Xavier, who did not desire a renewal of hostilities with the Winkles.

Blore fought his battles over again for many a day, under the direction of his old commander, and without molestation from the young mistress of the mansion, the lovely Virginia.

The widow Winkle could not be induced to abandon her abode in the village; but every year she spent a portion of her time with Walter at the chateau, in company with Wilsome and Flora, and where John Dowly was ever an honored guest.

Lucy, the new countess, and her sensible lord, came over regularly once a year in an American steamer. And Lowe never ceased to enjoy the angling and shooting in his old haunts.

Walter had the triumph of defeating Plastic in an exciting political campaign; while the colonel retained his place in the Senate.

Roland was cast in a suit prosecuted by Bawson, and adjudged to pay Elizabeth, his wife, two thousand dollars per annum for her maintenance.

Bill Dizzle and Patty occupied a comfortable farm-house on Walter's estate—the one catching, the other cooking the frogs and "turtles."

Honoria disappeared after the publication of Walter's nuptials. It was surmised that she had entered a convent. But Mr. Fimble continued to obtain lucrative contracts from the government, until the inauguration of the next President, who was an American.

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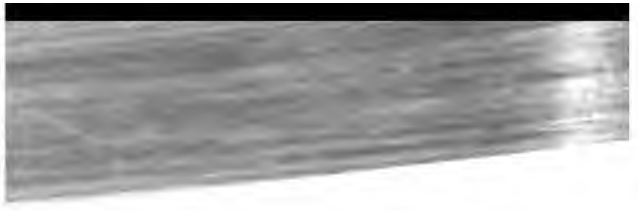
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